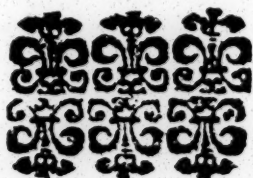


RELIGIO
STOICI.

Mackenzie

ACTS, I. II.

*—Ye men of Galilee, why stand
ye gazing up into heaven? —*



EDINBURGH,

Printed for Robert Brown, and are
to be sold at his Shop, at the Sign
of the Sun, over against the
Cross, 1663.



T H E
S T O I C K

To his
C E N S U R E R S.



Am, by Religion, a *Protestant*, and such confide little in merit; and by Humour, a *Stoick*, and such are most unconcerned in censures: Wherefore, as I intend to rival none of these who count *fame*, I hope none of these will asperse me; and if I obtain truce from them, I know none else will attack me.

The multitude (which albeit it be said to have many heads, yet, was ever known to have few brains) will doubtless condemn me for en-

A 2 veighing

veighing against vanity, whilst I myself am so vain as to write Books ; and will pronounce me as ridiculous in this, as these Philosophers were of old, who denyed motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheek ; to whom my return shall be, that finding many (even of such as I know will censure me) be-myred in the puddle of error, I have, in this Essay, proffer'd them my assistance, with an intention, not to shew my strength, but my compassion. I am no such fool, as to shew these *Philistines* the *Sampsons*-lock wherein my strength lyes, which doubtless their cruelty would never spare.

Others, who, by their gravity, (or serious dulness) have sublimated themselves above the rabble, will possibly accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentrick to my employment. But, these may know, that thir
Papers

Papers are but the pairings of my other Studies, and because they were such, I have flung them out into the streets. Neither can I understand, how it proves a Lawyer to be remisse in his employment, that he takes leisure to reach a little helebor which lyes by him, to such poor persons, as because of their phanatick melancholy stand much in need thereof. This discourse is intended to be a medicine, and such never relish well nor receive commendation from their pleasantesse, but from their profit, and are not to be censured by their taste, but by their operation.

There are many things in this small Peece, which may seem heterodoxe to such as desie *custom*, and worship the *Dagon* of authorized tradition: Yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it differ from the publick Clock of the City; especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly

ly the dyal of Faith, declared which of the two is in the right. I acknowledge the Church to be my Mother; neither will I offer to scratch out my Mothers eyes when they perceive my errors: yet, I believe that a childe may differ from his mothers judgement, in things wherein her honour is not concerned: But, I will wed no opinion without her consent who is my Parent; or, if I have wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and it's Officials, to grant me a divorce. I submit my self and this Tractat to her and their censures, and desires none to believe me or it, but in these things on'y wherein I believe her and them. As for others, since I have taken the liberty to write, I were unmannerly if I refused them the liberty to censure; and really it pleases my humour, to see curren bark and snarle at what I hold out to them.

THE

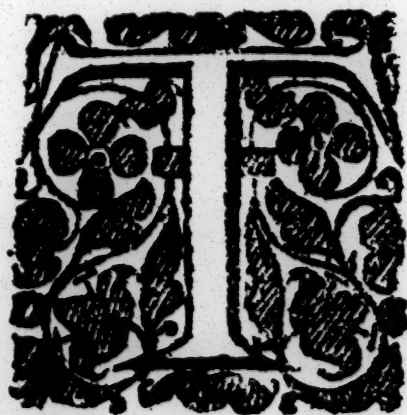
G. Mk.

(i)



THE
STOICKS

Friendly
ADDRESS
To the
PHANATICKS
Of all SECTS and SORTS.



*He mad-cap Zealots
of this bigot Age,
intending to mount
heaven, Elias-like,
in Zeals fiery Cha-
riot, do, like foolish
Phaeton, not only fall themselves
from their flaming seat, but by their
furious over-driving, envelop the
world in unquenchable combustions;
and when they have thus set the whole
A Globe*

Globe on a blaze, this they tearm a new light. It is remarkable in Scripture, that Jehu, who drove furiously, and called up the Prophet to see what zeal he had for the house of God, was even at that instant, doing it more wrong then ever was done to it by unconcerned Gallio, who flantingly cared for none of those things. And that none of all the apostolick Conclave desired ever fire might rain from above upon mis-believers; except the Sons of Zebedee, who immediatly thereafter, arrived at that pitch of vanity, as to desire to sit in heaven upon Christs right and left hand. And that Peter, who was the first who did draw a sword in his Masters quarrel, was likewayes the first who denyed him. Firy Zeal blows soon up, such combustible mater as the Sons of Zebedee; and that flash being spent and evaporat, a fall follows, as befell Peter. As that bo-
dy

dy is hardly cureable, which entertains such ill-suited neighbours as a cold Stomach and a hote Liver; So, the body of the visible Church may be now concluded to be in a very distempered conditon, when it's Charity waxeth cold, and it's Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either; and these feaverish fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in it's old and cold age, betokens too much that it draws near it's last period.

The inconsiderableness likewyses of our differences, and inconsiderateness wherewith they are persued, induces me to believe, that the Zeal now a-la-mode, is not that holy Fire which is kindled by a coal from the Altar, but is that ignis fatuus, or wild-fire, which is but a Meteor peec'd up of malignant Vapours, and is observed to frequent Church-yards ofter then other places.

(4)

I am none of those who acknowledge no temples, besides these of their own heads. And I am of opinion, that such as think that they have a Church within their own breasts, should likewises believe, that their heads are steeples, and so should provide them with bells. I believe that there is a Church-militant, which, like the Ark, must lodge in it's bowels all such as are to be saved from the flood of condemnation: but, to chalk out it's bordering lines, is beyond the geography of my Religion. He was infallible who compared Gods Spirit to the wind which bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound of it, but knows not whence it comes, or whether it goeth. And the name graven upon the whit-stone, none knows but he who hath it. Eli concluded Hannah to be drunk, when she was pouring out her soul before her Maker: and Elias believed, that the Church,

Church, in his dayes, was stinted to his own person; and yet God told him, that there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal: why then should any private Christian determine, magisterially, that, wherein the greatest of Prophets erred?

The reed wherewith the Temple was to be measured, Rev. 11. 2. was only entrusted to an Angel; and yet he had not in commission, to measure the Court that was without, because it was given to the Gentiles. And albeit, Rev. 7. the number of the Jews who were saved is determined; yet, the number of Gentiles is left indefinit, and said to be numberless.

There is nothing more ordinar, then for each Nation to confine the Church within themselves. And in that Nation again, one corner will have themselves the Sanctum Sanctorum

rum of that only Temple; albeit our Saviour in His Gospel assures us, that men shall come from all corners of the world, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And John in his Revelation tells us, that multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were seen following the Lamb. Upon this same block do these likewyses stumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableness upon the gates of heaven, to debar whole Professions, such as Lawyers and Physitians, from entring in thereat; notwithstanding that the abovesited place tells us, that there were only twelve thousand of the tribe of Levi the Priest chosen, and the like number was prickt; in the tribe of Judah, the Law-giver: Aaron the Priest did mould the golden calf, and not Moses the Judge; and Korah and Dathan were Levites, and yet mutined against their Magistrates.

I say not this to disparage that holy Function : For , none shall wish Aarons rod to flourish more then my self ; and ordinarily, these who love not to touch the Lords anointed , will likewyes be sure, to do His Prophets no harm : but, I say it to take off an aspersion which hath stain'd too long, and too unjustly, these of my own profession. Is not the Church our common Mother ? albeit , I confess, she is likewyes their Nurse , in a more particular way ; and since there is heavenly Mannah enough to aliment us all , why should Christians deny to admit their brethren to an equal partage ?

*It grieves me sore to see my mother the Church tortur'd like Rebecca, by carrying struggling twaines in her pained bowels. And seeing all Christians are but pilgrims here, I admire that these pilgrims should leave off to journey , and stand skirmishing
and*

and fighting with all such as will not travel their road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes pains, and is sufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they should walk; yet, we must compell them, as if either He needed our help, or we resolved to share with Him the glory of their conversion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitely better then one any of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedom in our choice, albeit we poor miscreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedom which he allows all the Creation. I wish we would consider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family and performs all common duties, rational enough without any compulsion; and yet, in the affairs of Religion, wherein doubtless man is led by a far more infallible assistance, there are many slips committed.

mitted, daily and grossly, notwithstanding of all the pains taken, and force used by one man towards another. Thus it fairs with us as with Patients, whom when the Physitians stints to a narrow dyet, then they loath even that food, which their unreined appetite would never have rejected. And this makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Hereticks vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancies, the world should be no more troubled with these, then they are with the Chimeras of Alchemists and Philosophers. And it fairs with them as with Taps, which, how long they are scourged, kecp foot and run pleasantly, but fall how soon they are neglected and left to themselves.

In order to which, it was wittily observed by our great King James the Sixth, that the Puritans of his age strove with him, and yet ceded
at

at first, in a difference between them and the Shoe-makers of Edinburgh: For, not only pleases it their humour to contend where they may gain honour and can lose none, but likeways, by contesting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the people their pious courage, assuring the world, that such attempts require a particular assistance from heaven; and when their jangling hath extorted some concessions from the Magistrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they press that success as an infallible mark of the Jure-divinoship of their quarrel. Albeit, I confess, that when these, not only recede from the canonized Creed of the Church, but likeways incroach upon the Laws of the State, then, as of all others, they are the most dangerous; So, of all others, they should be most severely punished.

Opinion, kept within it's proper bounds, is an pure act of the mind:
and

and so it would appear, that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the soul, is as unjust as to punish one relation for another. And this blood-thirsty zeal, which hath reigned in our age, supposes our most mercifull God to be of the same temper with these pagan Deities, who desired to have their Altars gorged with blood; and being devils themselves, delighted in the destruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, hath left no warrand upon holy Record, for persecuting such as dissent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempts others to idolatry, should be slain, yet, speaks He nothing of punishing these who were seduced by them. And why should we shew so much violence in these things whereof we can shew no certain evidence? as ordinarily we cannot

not in circumfundamental debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatick, what yesterday was judged Jure-divino? And do not even those who persecuted others for their opinions, admire why they should be, upon that score, persecuted themselves? So that (victory depending upon event) we legitimat the persecutions, to be used by others, against our selves, by the persecutions used by our selves, against others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tears, lest the wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the most pious persecutors know, that the Saints are not destroyed with the sinners?

*It is remarkable, that our Saviour disarmed zealous Peter, even when he was serving Him in person, in His greatest straits, and against the most profligat of His enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal even of the first and
best*

best of Christians, the blessed Apostles, their divine Master thought it fit to arme them not with swords, but with scrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcat in them, that His Kingdom was not of this world; convinceing them by an excellent argument, that He had no need of armes or armies; for else He could have commanded thousands of Angells. Did ever God command the Jews to war against any neighbouring nation because they were Pagans (a quarrel which would have lasted till all the world had been conquered) Or, did our Saviour leave in legacie to his servants, that they should force others to turn prosylits, which doubtlesse he had done, if he had resolved to allow such a rude mean of conversion? All which makes me admire, why in our late troubles, men really pious, and naturally sober, could have been
so

so transported, as to destroy whom they could not convince, and to perswade these who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to destroy others.

My heart bleeds when I consider how scaffolds were dyed with Christian blood, and the fields covered with the carcasses of murdered Christians; and its probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, then were saved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches; and in this, I admire the clemency of our Royal Master, who, albeit His cause was more just then theirs, albeit He might have convinced them by obtruding to them their own practices: yet, hath rather chosen to command with His Scepter then His Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at which these do levell, Why bestow they not their zeal, rather in converting such as scarce know or acknowledge that there

is a God ? And why are they more enraged against these who agree with them in most things, then these who dissent from them in all ? Take not Christians more pains to refute one another, then to convince Gentiles ? And stand not Episcopists and Presbyterians at greater distance, then either do with Turks and Pagans ? And to evidence, that rather humour then piety occasions our differences, we may easily percieve, that the meaner the subject is, the heat is alwayes the greater.

If I had ever known so much as one whose faith had been the trophy of a debate, I should allow of debates in maters of Religion : but seeing men cannot be convinced by miracles, it were ridiculous to presse conversion by arguments. All the Divines in Europe could not press the best founded of their contraverted and polemick truths, with so much scripture,
or

or so many miracles as our blessed Saviour did His own divinity (which is the foundation of all truths) And yet the Jews and all the world besides, slighted this infallible doctrine; And to evidence that there is a season of grace, independent from arguments, did not many thousands turn proselytes at Peters sermon? whom all our Saviours homilies and miracles could not persuade. If one should say, that the testimony of a few fisher-men should not be believed in a matter of so great consequence, as is the salvation of the whole world, especially when they did depone as witnesses, in a matter wherein both their honour and livelyhood was concerned, might not this stagger some mean Christian? And yet I believe these truths so much the more, because such as these were its first asserters; for, certainly it is one of the greatest of miracles, that so few, and

so

so illiterate persons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we see, that one may account that a miracle which another looks upon as a folly; and yet, none but Gods Spirit can decide the controversy. Matters of Religion and Faith, resembling some curious Pictures and optick Prismes, which seems to change shapes and colours, according to the several stances from which the asspicient views them.

The ballance of our judgments hath caught such a bruise by Adams fall, that scarce can we by them know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: For, when we take either the pro or con. of any controversy into our Patronage, we throw alwayes in arguments into that scale, wherein our own opinion lyes, without ever taking leisure to consider

B what

what may be alledged for the antipode proposition : and then , when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it , but by what slight it may be answered ; and thus either passion , interest or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the ballance.

This fiery zeal hath likewyses made an other pimple flash out in the face of the phanatick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all Gods creatures , the wicked being only usurpers and not masters of them : But, I have heard this opinion (so beastly is it) confuted by Balaam's asse, who could tell it's Master, Am not I thine own asse? When Aaron and the people did covenant without Moses , then every man did bring his ear-rings to make up the golden calf. And we have lived in an age, wherein we have seen
our

our Countrey-men, like the Chaldeans, take the furniture both of the Temple and of the Kings House, and carry them away to their Babylon of confusions; and in an age wherein sober men were forced to lend monies, to buy for their own armes the heavy shakles of slavery,

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

Religion doubtless aims at two great designes, one is like the first Table, to perswade us to adore God Almighty. Another is to perswade us, like to the second Table, to love our neighbour, and to be a mean to settle all these jealousies, and compesce all these animosities which interest might occasion; and this appears by the Doxology jubilyed by the Angels at our Saviours birth, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. And therefore, as every private Christian should be tollerated by

his fellow subjects, to worship God inwardly according to his conscience; So all should conspire in that exterior uniformity of worship, which the Laws of his Countrey enjoins. The first remark which God made of us after the Creation, was, that it was not fit for man to be alone; there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by Gods own appointment. And seeing the Gospel tearms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think, that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seeing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawfull to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not for these, deny her to be His Spouse, much less should we deny her to be our mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment, that Monarchy is the best of Governments, live happily in Venice or Holland? And that traveller were absurd, who would

would rather squabble with these amongst whom he sojourns, then observe these rites and solemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives? What is once statuted by a Law, we all consent to, in choosing Commissioners to represent us in these Parliaments where the Laws are made; and so if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot say, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppress'd; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from these Lands which he purchas'd from our Trustee, whom we had impow. ed to sell it.

As David said to Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. why went the King out to catch a flea? So may I say to our great Divines, why contravert they about shadows? Is it fit that Christians, who find it too great a task to

govern their private souls, should be so much concerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, seeing many have been saved who were most inexpert in these questions, and that foolish zeal, passion, and too much curiositie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry in these, is neither necessary, because of the first, nor expedient, because of the last.

Since discretion opened my eyes, I have alwayes judg'd it necessar for a Christian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, then to his Confession of Faith, and to fear more the crookedness of his will, then the blindness of his judgment, delighting more to walk on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own salvation with fear and trembling, then to stand still with the Galileans curiously gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled
is

is to visit the widow and the fatherless ; and the dittay drawn up against the damned spirits shall be, That when our Saviours poor ones were hungry, they did not feed them ; when they were naked, they did not cloath them, without mentioning any thing of their unbelief in maters of Controversie or Government. And therefore I hope, that these to whom I address my self in this Discourse, will rather believe me to be their friend, because of their piety, then their enemy, because of their errors.

THE

Examen de la fin de l'année 1857



THE
VIRTUOSO,
OR
STOICK.



Albeit man be but *Atbas*
a statue of dust *isme.*

kneaded with
tears, moved by
the hid engines
of his restless
passions, a clod
of earth, which the shortest scaver
can burn to ashes, and the least
shower of rheums wash away to
nothing; Yet makes he as much
noise in the world, as if both the
Globes (these glorious Twaines)
had been un-wombed from that
formless Chaos, by the midwifry
of his wit; he speaks thunder,

B

looks

looks lightning, breaths storms, and by the eloquence of his own vanity, perswads himself that his commands are able to unhinge the Poles. From which boundless pride, I confidently conclude, that if a natural Instinct, or as the Stoicks terme it, *ὁρμητικὸς θεός*, had not irresistably bowed his faith to assent to a Deity, he had never, neither upon design nor in compliance to custom (as Atheists alledge) suffer'd to creep into his Creed, that there was one greater then himself, who could rein his affections, and bound their effects, according to the dictates of his irresistible will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments, levyed both from the stately fabrick of heavens arched Pend, and from the inimitable embroidery of earths flowry Boul, be requisite for conquering the infidelity of others, and for rendring them tributaries to that all-forming Essence: Yet, doth my faith render up the arms of it's depraved reason, and turn Prosolyte

to this divine truth, upon the sole sight of one of these dying Atheists; who, upon any surprisal, do with amazement throw up their eyes to heaven, as if they sent their looks in ambassade to beg assistance from thence; and cry, *God save me*, as if these beastly souls, when attacked unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other sick brutes, who when assaulted by sickness, are, by the hand of that same storge and instinct, led to some herb or flower, which is an Apothecary shop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I these arguments which are twisted together of three propositions so strong as these Instincts are; where truth, like the Sun, seems to dart home it's light in one unperceivable act, whereas in these, pur-blind nature may be mistaken, not only in judging of the truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and allyance. I know that that miscreant;

who began his hell upon earth, by being burnt at *Tholouse* for theorick Atheisme, did upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God*: Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offspring of custom: But poor soul, he might have considered, that seeing he had crept from his cradle into that error, and had run his glass to it's last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit: That therefore this expression was rather a confession than an escape, rather the product of a rational soul than of depraved custom; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a settled habit.

There is another Caball of Atheists, who think that this Belcefs was at first; but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of some strongly-pated States-man; who to over-awe the capriciousness of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do in-
stance

Or Stoick.

stance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whose palpable cheats grew up in their successors into religions; and whose inventions were received with as much bigotry, by the wisest of men, as is that Deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (say they) seeing the rational soul hath failed so oft, and so absurdly in its discoveries, how, or why, should we submit our selves slavishly to it's determinations? For that which doth at some times erre, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

To these I answer, that albeit, as to the particular way of worship, the world is oft times deluded. And albeit, even as to their apprehensions of this incomprehensible Essence, multitudes be some times misled; Yet, these staggering Fancies fix this great Truth, *that there is a Supreme Who must be adored*: For if this innate Instinct did not coopere with these impostures, in gaining an assent to their fictitious Religions and

Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane Authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, and to subjugate by these even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkned reason glimpsing to man, that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *Impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signeted; believes implicitly with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them. Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that none durst contemn so far, that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own Fancies for sacred Oracles. And albeit these hoodwinked Nations did erect a *παιδαριον* in their own hearts, wherein all these Vice-gods were worshiped; Yet were
all

all these but representations of the true God ; for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars* ; His Omniscience in their *Appollo*, &c. And it is very probable that the Heathens admired so each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deserved distinct Altars; so that their errors had their rise from rather too much than too little respect; and that as the same Ocean receives several names from the several shoars it washes, so, according to the several operations of the most High, did these deluded Pagans establish several Deities. But that all these did ultimately terminate in one, is clear from the Inscription of that Athenian Altar, *To the unknown God* ; from the designation of *συνθεοι*, from their common feasts or *θεοξενια* ; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Appollo*, which in Greek signifies *unus* ; as *Macrobius* observes, from their Altars erected, *Disque Deabusque omnibus*, and from the general invocation of all the Deities

The Virtuoso

Deities joyntly subjoynd to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented, as in one big mirrour to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a state and traditionall imposture, I would willingly know if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries was able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens politick designs, and which that rebell would have attempted, if either God had not restrained him, or himself had not known it impracticable. And it is most remarkable, that the first promoters of that divine Doctrine were persons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed
Ambition

Or Stoick.

Ambition and declined State im-
ployments ; and so it were absurd
to think that they invented these
in subordination to State Pro-
jects.

There is also much force in that
Argument, wherein from the nature
of prophesying, is concluded the
being of a God: for, to foresee, is
doubtless a way of seeing, far above
the reach of humane nature ; man
not being able to conclude but that,
What is possible upon both parts,
may come to pass upon either of its
parts. And hence it was, that the
Heathens themselves termed this
prediction *divination*, as if it could
not be but divine. As also, if there
were not a God, but that this were
a fiction, it would follow, that er-
ror and delusion (such as this *ex*
hypothesi) were able, and actually
did, of all other things, frame a man's
soul most to virtue: and that the
best of men (such as are the adorers
of a Deity) were both the greatest
cheats and block-heads. All which,
are

are absurdities to be hiss'd at by all who are masters of the meanest portion of humane reason.

There lurketh much curious contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all heathnish Religions, have been incomparably the chiefest witts in their times; for else they could not have impress'd the spirits of their disciples with such abstract principles; Yet, all their Models, seem repugnant to common reason: and they have chois'd to teach principles which seem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their gods, the Rites used by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcoran*, are absurdities unworthy of a rational belief, if man were not acted by an innate principle, to place the mysteries of Religion above his reason.

By which we see, that the impuration cast upon the Scriptures of their contrariety to reason, chocks likewayes the principles of all Nations:

Or Stoick.

ions : and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the short line of our reason might fathom, the omnipotency of God, and the weakness of our own reason, should remain still unknown : and seing our reason is only suitable to our nature, certainly if that infinite essence and it's mysteries might be comprehended by that same reason, which measureth things finit, we might conclude God to be finit likewise; and is it not impudence in us who know not the ebbing and flowing of the sea, nor the reason why the Adamant draweth the iron, to repine because we cannot comprehend the essence of God Almighty ? and then vainly to conclude, that because we cannot grasp within the short armes of our understanding, the vast bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity ? A conclusion as absurd, as if one should say, that when the nimble wings of an arrow transport it above our sight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived.

And

The Virtuoso,

And I am of opinion, that mysteriousness suits rarely well with divine Truths, the finest things using alwayes to be best wrapt up: thus if we listen to our hid inclinations, we will find a pleasing veneration in reserved silence; and our curiosity will swiftly follow, what by it's retiredness fleeth from us: silent groves whose bush-top trees lay their heads together, as in a conspiracy to resist the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, creat's a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did choise groves, So did the primitive Christians light their Devotions with torches and candles, intimating thereby that umbrag'd silence was an excellent Shryn for sincere devotions; and in this sense, it may be, the Word of God is said to be a Lantern to our steps, and the seven Churches are compared to seven Candlesticks. Did not our Saviour teach His disciples in parables? and was not the Ark veiled from the eyes of the people? the Pagans dispensed their

Or Stoick.

their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongst humane Writers, the most mysterious carry still the Lawrels: And why should we vainly wish to comprehend the nature of the Deity, seeing *Moses*, God's intimate, and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himself, when for our necessary instruction He would discover something of Himself to us, is forced *per ἀναγκη*, (as Divines speak) to discover Himself in a stile borrowed from humane frailty, and to express His infinite affections by our disordered passions.

I believe, that *Socrates*, nature's greatest disciple, and the Deity's *protomartyr*, was a proselyt of the same faith, which we profess, and had his large soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousness, whose refulgent rayes are now the bright torches of the christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this particular: seeing these, not being of the same perswasion with him, but
being

being convinced of his moral worth, did describe his opinions suitably to their own apprehension. Thus did these pagan Historians admire the great Saviour of mankind, only for His morall accomplishments, without reaching these divine principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewises were in all probability, a tribe of *John Baptist's*, and God having resolved to purge the Universe of its original unrighteousness by that blessed *Manna* which came down from heaven to give life to the world, did by their doctrine of abstemiousness, as by a spare dyet, prepare its body for receiving that divine Dose. And certainly, if men had disbanded that execrable troupe of lusts, against which these preached, and had listned (as the *Stoicks* Book of Discipline enjoyned) to their own private consciences, and had by retiredness abstracted themselves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their conversion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to

consult

Or Stoick.

th consult Christ how to draw up his
to Securities of heaven, and of his por-
tion there, had believed their Oracle,
he which decry'd riches as the unneces-
sary baggage of man's life, and the
mudd which clog'd the wings of the
souls contemplation, and kept it
from soaring its natural pitch, he had
never refused our Saviour's yoke,
because he was commanded to sell all
and to give it to the poor. Thus
likewayes if the rich glutton had dy-
eted himself according to the scant
prescript of their allowance, his
scoarched tongue had not stood in
need of a drop of watter to allay it's
thirst. Neither had *Nicodemus*
needed to have mantled himself in
the darkness of the night, when he
came to our Saviour, out of fear, lest
he should have been discovered; se-
ing their doctrine might have taught
him, that *fear* was a passion, un-
worthy to be lodged in the soul of
man: And that there is nothing here,
which a man either should, or need-
eth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this truth ; Yet is it both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this opinion, then its contrary. More satisfying, because man's *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the tranquillity of his spirit ; That which can best plaine and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable misfortunes, must be doubtless the most carressable of opinions : wherefore, seing nothing can strengthen so much man's frailty, nothing check so soon his despair, nothing feed so much his hope, nor animate so much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heaviest end of all our crosses upon the shoulders of His *love* ; who is able to turn, or arrest the giddie wheel of fortune by the strong hand of His Omnipotency ; and who twisteth Lawrels of inimaginable joyes for the heads of these who fight under his banners. If a man leaned
not

not his weary soul upon this divine Rest, he were not only an enemy to nature, but even to his own happiness. What rocks of danger could men escape, if blind-fortune did sit at the helme, and if vertuous persons complain, as affairs are presently stated? that their merites are not weighed with indifferency enough in the Scales of justice, What might be expected, if hazard got the ballance to mannage? And these who leave their native countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an unconstant Stile, and with a trembling voice, be-
hooved to leave the world, if this Anarchy were by Atheisme established? For as a wise Stoick well observed, *καὶ ἐστὶ ζῆν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, καὶ κενῇ προνοίᾳ.* *It were impossible to live in a world, void of God and void of providence.*

It is likewayes most safe; for if there be a Deity, doubtless these ob-
dured Atheists, whose obstinacy hath conjured their consciences to a

constrain'd silence, and brybed these infallible Witnesses, to depone what suited best with their wild resolutions, or rather neglected resolutely their sincere depositions: then certainly, the just flames of that God's indignation, whom they have disclaimed, will heat for them a furnace in hell, beyond what the other damned spirits shall meet with in their torture. Whereas albeit there be no tribunall, from which such a thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our actions shall be canvass'd, Then these who have paid their adorations at His altars, shall be in no danger. Wherefore, seing it should be the task of a *Virtuoso*, to turn out all such thoughts as may raise a mutiny in his breast; it were a foolish toy in him to entertain Atheisme, which is a Nurcery of disquietness: for whose breast could enjoy a calme whilst a concernment of so much weight, as his externall portion, did hing from the weak threed of a mere

may

may be, and of such a *may be*, as marches so near with a *will not be*?

But if ye would know, what disquieting vapours Atheisme sends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in: go to the horror-creating beds of a dying Atheist, whose roaring voice, might awake the most lethargick conscience that ever the devil lull'd a sleep. There ye shall know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water standing therein, what convulsion-fits his soul suffers; and shall learn from his own mouth, how grievously his diseased soul is stretched upon the rack of despair: then it is, that the voluminous Registers of his conscience, which did ly formerly clasp'd in some unsearcht corner of his memory, are laid open before him, and the devil who hitherto gave him the lessening end of the Prospect, to survey his sins in, turns now its magnifying end to his fearfull eye. It should be then the grand design of a Philosopher, to order his own breast aright, before

he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; least if he leave its door unbolted, the devil steal from him his richest Jewel, whilst he sweats to enrich his contemplation with what is of far less consequence.

See
per-
stition,

It is no wild fancy to think, that *Atheisme* hath been the product of *Superstition*: for certainly, many who were by humour *Gallio's*, finding that Religion exacted from men such inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the sacrificing children amongst the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages, and heftick Lents amongst Christians, did resolve rather to deny than to adore such Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnon's* sacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the grecian safety, crying out,

*Tantum Religio potuit suadere
malorum.*

And

And thus *Petronius Arbiter* a
monck of the same Cell, says that,

*Primus in orbe deos timor fecit,
fulmina cælo*

Cum caderent —————

And to prevent this, our Saviour
doth oft inculcat, that His yoke is
easie and His burden is light. And
doubtless, as the straightest line is
alwayes the shortest; So the most
rational designs are alwayes easily-
est effectuated; and as *Seneca* hath
excellently observed, *Licet Deus
non esset, tamen non peccarem ob
peccati vilitatem.* There is some-
thing of meanness in the gallantest,
and most alluring sin. And this is
most energetically exprest in Scrip-
ture, whilst it is said *that the wicked
weary themselves by their sins.* A
principle, which not only the ma-
gisterial Authority of God's Spirit,
but our experience likewayes places
above the reach of all scruples: for
are not the inquietuds, the cheats,
and palliated parricides, and sacri-
ledges brooded by ambition, the

churlishness and close-handedness parented by avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any rational soul ; And at which we should scarlet our cheeks with blushes, as well as enslave them through fear, and should stand as much in awe of our consciences, as most do of a Deity ? Yet, it may be we are in a mistake, whilst we place Superstition in the excess of such adorations, as are either commanded or indifferent : for seeing the object of our adorations, God Almighty, is in Himself infinit, we can never exceed either in our respects to Him, or in the expression of them. Excess being only admissible, where the object is finit, and where we attribute more than is due, which can never be here. Thus if Kneeling be lawfull at any occasion, I hardly see why it is not lawfull to kneel at all occasions. And if these exteriour rites and ceremonies (some whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requisite, for expressing our vassalage and subordination to
God

God our maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable, or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinite object. And seing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarchs to fall upon their face and worship; and our adorable Saviour, in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is by *Matthew* remark'd to have fall'n upon His face, by *Mark* to have fall'n upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneel'd. What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition? It would appear then, that Superstition consists in man's worshipping God by meanes unlawfull, such as are children-sacrifices, and such like, whereby His divine attributes are mis-represented, and tainted with cruelty, or tyrannie, and not in an excess, in such expressions of our respect as are in themselves lawfull. And if there be any strength in that argument, wherein we inforce
the

the being of God, from the harmonious consent and assent of all Nations : certainly , by that same argument, we may establish the decency, if not the necessity , of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bowes to Altars, without profound and external submissions ? And , who lodges upon the surface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to these gods whom they worship, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in most submissive Rites ?

*Why
the
world
was
creat-
ed.*

That God made all things for His glory, is an expression, which (I think) looks not well at the test of reason , and hath no warrant but unwary custome : for beyond all question, His glory was so brim-full formerly, that it neither needed, nor could recieve any considerable accession from this small drop. And besides this, the innate apprehension we have of doing any thing for one's glory , dyes this expression with some guile ; Yet, I confess, we may
warrant

warrantably say, that when perverse man calls His power in question, or controverts His being *only wise*; that then, God for our instruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this sense, the Scripture saith, that God will punish the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is said, that God doth, or createh any thing, for His own glory, it is doubtless in this sense; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory in the first sense, were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitely good, and all good being *sui communicativum*, that His design in creating the world, was to communicate and display His goodness: and upon this base probably hath *Aristotle* reared up his errour, of the worlds existency from all eternity: for, seing God was ab
eterno

eterno infinitely good, and that good is still communicative: he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab eterno*, God did communicate His goodness: which could only be to creatures. And therefore it was necessary that there should have been a world: and some Philosophers have aver'd, that the world flowed from God *per emanationem*, *ab eterno*, as beames are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of *Aristotle's* Partisans, nor holds my philosophy of him as my Superior; Yet I cannot but think, that God hath communicated His goodness to worlds prior to ours, which is but of 5662 years standing. But I am not so arrogant as to determine the time of the first worlds birth, nor how many Cadets it hath had, resolving to leave its Date, blank, to be fill'd up by some arrogant Pretender. Neither should I accuse mine own thoughts of Heresie, for concluding, that probably there are presently thousands of worlds co-existing with ours, where-
of

of some, it may be, are governed by Maximes. If not contrair, yet at least differnt from these which are our Canons. All which worlds, albeit they were actually subsisting, would ly in the bosome of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like so many small balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I shall not for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant french Curate, the parable of the Lepers, where it is said, *Nonne sunt decem mundi?* because I know that it was wittily answered, *Sed ubi sunt reliqui novem?*

That Eternity is all present, and that in it, there is neither preterit, nor future, is but a conceit, and a needlets mysterie imposed upon our belief, which is really more mysterious then the Trinity; who knows but it is founded upon an expression in *Cicero*, wherein Eternity is call'd *aternum instans*? For how then can it be said, that God was before the world? for *was* is preterit, and before

before the world there was, as themselves alledge, no time ; and so there was a *was* in eternity. Is not God call'd by Himself Alpha and Omega, first and last, the one whereof is preterite and the other future ? And it is said, *Rev. 16. 5. O glorious God, who art, and wast, and shalt be.* And if it be answered, That this is only fitted to our capacities ; certainly, that is all is craved : for, doubtlesse there is no such reall thing, as these three measures of time, even in things finit and created ; for they ow their being only to our conceit, as well in the one as in the other. And when God descriv'd Himself by His name *J A H I am*, it was not mean't, that no measure of time could be attributed to Him, but the present ; but rather, that what He was, was to man incomprehensible. And that all we could know of Him, was that He existed ; and by that expression, that all things to Him are present, was mean't, that by His Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines terme it) He com-

comprehends all things which were to be, as if they were really present; and this is spoke, not of his being, but of his knowledge. Neither can it be concluded that if *was* or *shall be*, may be attributed to God, then He must be mutable, and that *was*, denotats mutation; for as I said formerly, these are but termes, not really existing, and so cannot import any real mutation.

How God imployes His uncontrollable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower world, and in what characters He writs His eternal Decrees, hath been the arrogant study of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His cabinet Council. And albeit to deterre such bold intruders, He destroyed thousands of His ancient people, because they look'd into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulancie of some latter Witts, that they must needs look in to His unsearchable bosome, and there mar-
risha!

Pro-
vi-
dence.

rishtall all His Decrees, and conceit they understand His way of working; and thus in disputing of objects, infinitely removed by their obtruseness from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, then these who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it come so near, as that they may know of what species it is: for seeing it is a maxime, that there is nothing in our understanding, which hath not past to it thorow our senses, and that the things of God are immaterial, and so fall not under the cognizance of our senses; It must be folly to think, that any humane scrutiny can find out mysteries that are so unsearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediat revelation; a kind of correspondence which I concieve few now a dayes holds with heaven. Yet, I confess, it is as hard to confute their fictions, as it is impossible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this study is unattainable, so it is unprofitable

profitable for seeing God's art of governing the world, and His Decrees of saveing or damning its Citizens is a trade we shall never be able to practise, Why should we have such an itch to understand it? It should be enough to us, to be saved, albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees; except we be of the same mettall with that foolish patient, who would not be cured, because the Physician would not shew him how the cure was to be composed, and what were its ingredients. And is it not the Zenith and top-branch of madness for us to pry into Go'ds unsearchable Decrees, who know not how our neighbour's calf is formed in its Dames belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which some mean spirit'd Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceited that he wanted leasure to dispose of trifles.

*Non licet exiguis rebus adesse
Jovi.*

For if the twinkling of an eye,
were

were not time sufficient for God to dispose upon all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power then His ; and the power to dispose so suddainly , were wanting to his Omnipotency, and so He were not infinit, and consequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomontade of *Alphonſus*, King of *Portugal*, more pious then this ; when he alleadged that if God had made use of His advice in framing the world , He had helped many things in it , which he now could justly taxe of errour.

These two extremes, are the two Poles , whereon the globe of Atheisme turns it self ; some , out of an impious humility , complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He disposes of the meaner size of business , and others detracting from His providence, in attributing His operations to chance and fate, or branding them with injustice or imprudence.

There are among School-men two
opinions

opinions which dispute victory with (almost) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the sole agent, and to make use of secondary causes, only, as of ciphers; these say that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad presentiam ignis*; nor water which cools, but that God cools *ad presentiam aque*: which is, in my opinion, the same thing as to say, that God jugl'd with man; and as Charmers do, presented ingredients, but wrought by hid means.

In too near an affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predestination as some teach it, wherein they will have man to play the mere spectator in his own Salvation: and albeit there be a free and full tender of mercy made to lost man, yet will not allow him any power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the necessary appanages of God's Omnipotency, that He doth save or condemn *ex mero beneplacito*; never considering, that the question is not,
D what

what God can do, but what He doth: And that it derogats nothing from His Omnipotency, that He will not damn poor sinners, who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obstinacy; because it was never free to them to do otherwise: and how (I pray you) could the sluggard in the parable, have been punished, for not improving his talent, and laying it up in a napkin, if God had by His Decree cast an insolvable knot upon that napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have secondary causes the sole agents; and reaches, that God in the first moulding of each creature, did dote it with innate qualities, sufficient to act every thing requisite for its subsistence; but in sign of its subjection to its Maker, reserved to Himself, as His prerogative royal, a power to bend and bow these inclinations upon extraordinary occasions, for the good of the Universe, or when His infallible Omni-prudence should think

ex-

expedient. Thus, when that All-
eyeing eye of the world, the Sun,
was first turn'd off the frame, it had
in Commission to sow its influences
over the world without any retard-
ment; Yet was its motion arrested,
and turn'd back by an extraordinar
warrant in the dayes of *Joshua* and
Zeackiah. Thus they make the
creatures resemble a Watch, which
after it is once compleated, goes by
its own Springs and Wheels, with-
out the Artist's continual assistance.
Yet, when either its motion becomes
irregular, or when the owner finds
it fit, it is unpeee'd, or hath its In-
dex put forward or backward at his
pleasure. And this last, seems to
suit best with the principles, both of
Christianity and Stoicisme. With
Christianity, because it gives a check
to presumption, and suffers not man
to think himself the sole arbiter of
his own condition; because God can
easily quash these babylon-like fan-
cies, which his topleess ambition is
still a building; and to his despair,

because a lift from the strong arme of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This corresponds best likewayes with Stoicisme, because it pulls the hands of a sluggard from his bosome and setts them awork to prepare for himself, and not to repose his unreasonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps these from sinking, who endeavour to swimme. This likewayes takes from man, all excuse of sinning, not suffering him to lay over his viciousness upon Providence, a shift too ordinar amongst such, as misunderstand the rashless Doctrine of the reformed Churches.

This opinion makes us likewayes understand, what the Heathens meant by *fortune*, which they termed *giddie*; what the Stoicks meant by *fate*, which they confessed to be *irresistable*; and in what sense Philosophers concluded, that each man could hammer out his own fortune. As to the Pagan's *fortune*, it cannot be thought, that seing it was by them-

themselves confess'd to be *blind*, that they could trust it with the reins of the admirably manag'd world. And seeing they confess'd, that it was alwayes staggering and unconstant, it cannot be thought that they could ascribe to it, all these curious and just events, which they themselves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philosophers, having through the prospect of nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, observed, that man (who acted from a freedom of spirit unrestrained, either by providence or starr-influences as to his ordinar operations) was of a volatile and capricious humour; therefore they concluded, that the state of humane affairs, which was framed and unframed at his ill-fixt pleasure, behoved necessarily to be most subject to changes. And that seeing the victories of *Cesar*, depended upon the inclinations of his souldiers, who by abandoning him, would fetch his prosperity away with them:

they had reason therefore to terme his fortune Frail and exposed to hazard.

Thus the advancement of the restless Courtier is uncertain, because it hinges from the humor of his Prince, whose spirit hath some allay of unconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearfull subject, who trembles under his Scepter. And thus the oyl-consuming Student, can promise himself no applause, because the paralytick hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the scales wherein his abilities are weighed.

In fine, *fortune* was nothing to these Ancients, but the unbodied freedom of man's will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other creatures, (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changeable) then which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God
makes

makes all humane inclinations run sometime against the byasse of their specifick nature, was by them termed *fate*. And this in their mythologic they fabled to be an Adamant chain, which they fastned to the foot of *Jupiter's* chair, meaning by its adamantine nature, that it was hard to be brok like the Adamant; and by fastning it to *Jupiter's* chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's power. Thus *fortune* and *fate*, were to them but the right and left hands of christian providence.

These embodied angels, the *Stoicks*, finding that fortunes megrim could not be cured, nor fates decrees rescinded, and yet resolving, in spite of all external accidents, to secure to themselves a calmness of spirit; did place their happiness in the contempt of all these follies, whose blossomes fortune could not blast, and sought for happiness in an acquiescence to all which providence did unalterably decree; So that neither fortune nor fate could stand in the way of their hap-

happiness, because they slighted the one, and submitted to the other.

And in this sense, each man in their schools, was admitted to be Master-of-work to his own fortune: and that without disparaging the omnipotent power of the great Fortune-maker, in submission to whom their happiness was plac'd.

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God, be the *basis* of true Stoicism, and a firmer one than any the Heathens could pretend to; Yet, that knowledge of Him, which by the curiosity of School-men and the bigotry of Tub-preachers, as now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the least necessary and the most dangerous. And whereas we did see God but in a Glass formerly, that Glass is now so misted and soyl'd by each Pedant's flegmatick breath, that it is hard to see Him at all, but impossible to see Him there. And to extend a little that mysterious analogy; we are said to behold God here, as in a
Glass

Glass, and as objects are best perciev-
ed in the smoothest mirrors ; So the
plainest descriptions of Him, are still
the truest: for when He is seen by
Atheists in the globe-glass of their
infidelity, He appears less then re-
ally He is, when beheld by the Pa-
gans in the multiplying Glass of Pa-
ganisme, He appears many; and
when He is look't upon in the mag-
nifying Glass of Superstition, though
He appear but one, Yet He is misre-
presented, because He is represented,
as more terrible then He desires to
appear: and ordinarily the better cut
Glasses are, and the more artificiall,
the worse the face is by them repre-
sented.

That first Curse which did sowe *Theo-*
all the world with briers and *logy.*
thorns, did, of all other things, fall
most heavily upon the soul of man.
Which because it was chief in the
transgression, ought in reason to
have been most tortured in the pu-
nishment. And now his disquieted
spirit

spirit, is daily pierc'd with the prickles of thornie disputes and debates : which, as like briers, they produce no fruit fit for alimenter that noble half of man, which is his rational soul ; So do they, like thorns, pierce his tender conscience, and to screw his torments to their highest pinn ; the thoughts of God, and of settlment in Him, which like balme should cure these sores, is become that hemlock, which occasions his distractions, and poysons his meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-christians ; Yet, many of their successors, have mixt it so with the tart vinegar of contention, that that milk begins now to crudle, and so is become loathsome to the appetite of tender believers. For, most of Churchmen, being idle, and conceiving, that if they taught only the holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laicks be undervalued as easy ; and that they would be denyed that applause, which

which was due to quaintnesse of wit, especially in a settled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the heathen Priests; nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the most High, under the old and new Testaments. Did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himself a new kind of Divinity. The more pragmatick sort, and these whose humour was edged with choler, invented polemick or controverted divinity. And so by an intestine and civil war of opinions, raised within the bowels of Religion; did waste and pillage that holy Canaan, which formerly flowed with the milk of sincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Consolations. And then, that precious blood, which formerly purpled only pagan-scaffolds, dyed now the swords of fellow-believers: who, to propagate their private judgment, buried Churches under their rubbish, fed the birds of heaven with

with the carcases of pious and reverend Church-men ; and by the mad hands of bigott opiniastrity, brok to pieces all the sacred bonds of natural and civil duties : and thus they raised the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again ; and made this Itch of disputing, turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whose brains sullen melancholy, form'd phantomes and ideas, invented scolastick Theology; and these, in abstract cells, erected a Mint-house for coyning the dross of their own contemplations, into wonderfull bombast notions : and to make them go current, in the suffering Church, gave them the *impressa* of Theology.

A third sort, not able to soare their pitch in the sky of Invention, resolved to set up a correspondence with heaven : and this they called enthusiastick, or inspired, Theology. And their Cabbins were Post-houses, where one might know what was resolved lately in the conclave of
heaven

heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what should be the issue of our pious rebellions. These could likewise cast the horoscop of your salvation; and invented a species of Physiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face, and if one had the traicts of an elect child of God. After this fashion did they prophesie their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not some likewayer, who, out of a well meaning desire, to make the lamp of truth darte its rayes with the clearer splendor, snuff it so nearly, that they extinguish it quyt: and leavs us nothing but the stink of its snuff; like some curious Physicians, who purge so frequently, that they destroy the body entrusted to their cure. We in this Island have met with some of these *Charletans*, who, I am confident, purged oftner both Church and State, then *Luke*, the beloved physician,

cian, would have prescribed, if we had had the good fortune to have been his Patients.

The talest witt is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) many disjoint their witts in stretching them too high in the inquiry of its mysteries. Neither impute I our short-coming in the knowledge of these mysteries, folly to their obscurity ; but, I believe, our meditations are more clouded in relation to these, then really they need to be, because of their innate frailty : for we see, that some who are masters of much reason in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions: wherefore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the soul in this, as usually it doth with the body, whose pulls are proportionally the weaker, as the thing grasp'd-after is plac'd above its true reach. And so these arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, because they raise their meditations too high on their tip-toes : whereby they are disabl'd from im-
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ploying all their naturall vigour, in pulling at these weighty and sublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is nearest, as meanner witts do, (and so are more successfull) but endeavour a fetch at what in Divinity is highest, by which effort, their endeavours are fainter, then these whose spirit is of a lesser size. And these colossus witts, become the greatest Hereticks, as these ordinarily are most burnt, whose fingers ofttest stir up fires, and as Chirurgians have moe cuts and wounds, then any other Mechanicks, who handle not so oft these wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man should wrestle too much with these mysteries, least his reason, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more busied my thoughts, then to find a reason why the Heathens, who were as assiduous and zealous too in the worship of their gods, as we Christians, did never frequent Sermons, nor knew no such part of divine Service; whereof

whereof (probably) the reason was because their Governors (whose commands amongst them were the sole *jure-divinoship* of all Ecclesiastick Rites) feared, that Church-men, if they had been licenc'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that gross body : which was the reason likewyses, why in the primitive Church (as one of their Historians observes) *ex formula populo predicabant , tantum antiquitas timebat* *ἡμωρογυς*. They preached only approved Sermons, so much did antiquity fear these leaders of the people, a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of *Russia* : and this seemeth also to have been the reason, why all Liturgies have prick't texts for their Preachers, lest if they had been left a freedom in their choice, they had chose such as might, in the letter, have suited best with such seditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious homilies, at remarkable or festival occasions.

casions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctors, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would easily have eluded that canonick designe. If we should parallel the homilies, which these renowned Fathers have left, as Legacies, to posterity, with these which our age runs after, we would find, that the first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses* rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured sinners; whereas many of these last are but State-gazets, wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate: And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and His people, they have made themselves Heraulds, to denounce warres betwixt God's Vice-gerent and His subjects. Thus, *Peter's* successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword then watch for their Master. And since our Saviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*,

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and filled their hands with the keyes, these who offend them are sure to get over the head with these. I confesse, God hath not left His Church without some skilfull Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbour of Salvation: to whom this Discourse and it's Author shall pay all respects.

The strictness of Churches, Most of all Churches do, like coy maids, lace their bodies so strait, that they bring on them a consumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themselves: and as this niggardliness hath possesse Churches, so from that root hath stem'd the churlishness of some private Christians, who will allow God but a most inconsiderable number of these whom He hath admitted to make up His visible Church. Thus, some Pastors will only admit two or three to be guests at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own spinning: and others, with their uncharitable hands, blur
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the names of all their acquaintances out of the Books of Life, as if they were keepers of His Registers and Rolls; and will only have seats kept in the Church, triumphant, for three or four Sisters, who are so frugal of their devotions, as to spare them at home, to the end, they may be liberal in publick. But both these should consider, that the new *Jerusalem* is said to have more gates then one; that *John* in his *Revelation* tells us, that numberless numbers were seen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wise Framers of the world made such a spacious dwelling as heaven, to be inhabited by so inconsiderable a number: whereas hell (in the geography of believed tradition) is only the small kernel of this small shell *the earth*. I know, that many are called and few chosen; and that the way is strait, and few enter in at it: But we should consider, that these chosen, are said to be few, in respect only of these many who are called. Which is most certain; for ten

Parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahometans, (and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malicious Hereticks; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and publick sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, Yet the number would be small in comparison of these others: The body of the visible Church, must (like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body should be suffer'd to swell with humours, yet I would not wish, that it should be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) should not be so nearly pair'd, as that the body may bleed; yet, they should be so pared, as that christians may not scratch one another. They should feed, not upon blood, but milk: and they are unmannerly guests, who will not suffer others to sit at their Masters table with them.

It pleases my humour to contemplar,

templat, how, that albeit all Religions war against one another; yet, are all of them governed by the same principles, and even by these principles, in effect, which they seem to abominat. Thus, albeit the cessation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the most bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what prophesies they have oraculously pronounced. And seing all confess, that God, in our dayes, breaks the prosperous upon the same Wheel, on whose top they did but lately triumph; making *fortune* adopt the oppressed in their vice; why should we talk so much of the ceasing of miracles? For, doubtless, these effects are in policy, as contrair to nature, as are the swimming of iron, or sweetning of rivers; or rather more: Seing in the first, mans will is forc'd (without which, such revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the last, dull and sensual qualities are only wrested;

which, as they are not so excellent, so, doubtless, are not able to make such resistance as the Soul of man: Yea, I should rather think, that the world being become old, must, doubtless, be more dim-sighted (as all old things are) then formerly; and therefore, God doth now present greater objects of admiration to our eyes then He did formerly: For, man is become so atheistical, that if God did not presse His meditations with such infallible testimonies of the being of an irresistible power, he would, doubtless, shake of all resolutions of submitting. Thus, we see that in all the tract of *John's* Revelations, miracles grow still more frequent, the nearer the world draweth to it's grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the less is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisit at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to cede

cede to it, and to make an *exit* at it's entry ; much more, should miracles be necessar , for fixing any Religion against the received constitutions of a previously settled Church. But to prosecute my first design, it is remarkable , that albeit infallibility be not by all, conceded to any militant Church ; yet, it is assumed by all : Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of heretick, and account him (almost) reprobate, who would refuse to acknowledge the least rational of their Principles : and thus these Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them scal'd the walls of preferment themselves. That Church-men should immerse themselves in things civil, is thought extrinsec to their sphere, even *in ordine ad spiritualia* : And yet, even the *Capuchins*, who are the greatest pretenders to abstract Christianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth most in things civil. The
Phanaticks

Phanaticks enveigh against *Presbyterian Gowns*. The *Presbyterian* tears the *Episcopal lawn Sleeves*, and thinks them the whore of *Babel's* shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the *popish Robes*, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipates his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyn good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-catholick* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatick* believes the Lords Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allowes it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholick* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their symbolick qualities predomine in somemore then in others. And if that maxime hold, that *magis & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion.

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The Church, like the river *Nile*, can hardly condescend where it's head lyes; and as all condescend that the Church is a multitude of christians, so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessar for being saved) I make the Laws of my country to be my Creed: and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessar for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgments how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded, so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazleing a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's soul, to behold Him invironed with
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the rayes of divine Majesty , did bestow upon us, three mirrours, wherein we might contemplat Him (as we use to look upon the Sun in a tub of water , not daring eye His native splendor) the one was the mirrour of the Law, the second is the works of the Creation, and the third is the Soul of man, which He Himself hath told us is framed after His own glorious Image.

As for the first mirrour, the Law ; God knowing that *instinct*, or as we terme it, *a natural conscience*, were compleat digests of all that man was to observe, He did make that mirrour very little , a volumne of only two pages ; but that mirrour is, of late, so mullered about, by marginal Notes and Commentars , that the mirrour it self is almost over-spread by them ; and it is very observable, that in the holy Registers, the Law is still abridg'd, but we never see it enlarg'd : For, albeit the fundamental Laws of both Tables were packed up in narrow bounds, yet our Saviour
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sums them in these two, *fear the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and, love thy neighbour as thy self.* And the Apostle *Paul*, in his divine Epistles, professes, that he desires to know only Christ, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Saviour were to preach in person, once more to the world, He would inveigh against our Casuists, as much as He did against the Jewish Talmudists; for, the one as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the shoulders of weak christians, with the unnecessary trash of humane inventions. For, I remember to have seen a late Casuist, dispute contentiously amongst his other cases, whether Tobacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded fast or not? To which, after a feaverish conflict, his wisdom, forsooth, returns this oraculous answer; *That if Tobacco be taken at the nose, it breaks not the fast, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the fast.* Which, because I made

made a Collaſterion betwixt the Caſuiſts and the Talmudiſts, I ſhall only mention out of the Talmude (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a caſe, exactly parallel to this : wherein is decided, that if a man carry a burden on the Sabbath day, upon both his ſhoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath, but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one ſhoulder. As to my own private judgment, (which I ſubmitt to my ſpiritual tutors) I think , that ſeing the conſcience of man, is the ſame faculty with the judgment when converſant about ſpiritual imployments (as the word *ſouveraineté* which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own ſelf, doth abundantly evidence) that therefore, as there are judgments of different tempers ; So there are likewiſe conſciences of different frames : and which vary as much amongſt themſelves, as natural conſtitutions do. And therefore, as the ſame Doſe would prove noxious to one con-

constitution, wherein another would find his health; So in one and the same act, that resolution may be saving to one conscience, which may condemn another: for, seeing God hath kindled a torch in each mans breast, by whose flame he may see what path he should beat. In which sense it is said, *Prov. 20. 27. That the understanding of man is the candle of the Lord*; and can that light mislead? And seeing man must be answerable according to what it prescribes to him, doubtless it is fitter that he should hearken to the reiterated dictates of his conscience, than to the resolution of any School-casualist: and that for the same reason, that it is more rational to obey the Law it self, than the wisest Lawier, who may either be deceived himself, or have a design to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing necessary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtless bestowed upon him an internal

ternal touch-stone, by whose test he may discern betwixt good and evil ; seing to command man to walk uprightly, and not to bestow on him eyes to see the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to punish him if he went astray. And as the composure of man's body, would be imperfect and manck, if he wanted a palate to discern betwixt the tast of what is wholesome, or what is putrid ; So if the soul of man were not able to know its own duty, and by the palate of a natural conscience, to difference betwixt lawfull and unlawfull : certainly the soul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beasts are by an intrinsick principle taught their duty, and do accordingly shun or follow what is convenient for them, without consulting any thing from without. And shall man be less perspicacious, or more defective then these ? As also seing man is oftentimes by thousands of occasions, removed far from the assistance of Chair or
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Pulpit-informers ; and in that his retiredness, hath most of these cases to be resolved : it were absurd to think that he then wants sufficiency of help for their resolution. And it is most observable in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for quenching the Spirit, but never for not consulting Casuists. I know it may be thought, that when the soul of man rages at sometime in a feaver of lust, revenge, or some such sin, that then the conscience may rave ; Yet I dare say, that albeit the soul, out of an inordinat desire to enjoy its own pleasures, may set its invention a work, to palliat the sinfulness of what it desires ; yet by some secret knell, the conscience sounds still its reproof. And I dare say, that never man erred without a check from his conscience ; nor that ever any sinned, after an approbation obtained from his conscience of what he was about : and when we assent to these Doctors, is it not because our consciences, or our judgments (which
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are the same) assent, to what they inform? which evidences, that our consciences are more to be believed, then they, by that rule, *Propter quod unumquodq; est tale, &c.* but to convince us of the folly of our addresses to these Doctors. It may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a sin in me, which a Casuist pronounces to be none, as if my breast did suggest to me, that it were a sin to buy Church-lands; if thereafter I did buy them, it were doubtless a sin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church, assured me, that the sale of Church-lands were no sin in it self. I am confident then, that this Casuist-divinity, hath taken its rise from the desire Church-men had to know the mysterie of each man's breast, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without consulting their Cell; perswading men, that *in ordine ad spiritualia*, their consciences, and consequently their Salvation, may be interested in every civil affair.

affair. And to confirm this, it is most observable, that this trade is most used by *Jesuits* and Innovators, who desire to know all intrigues and subvert all States, whereas the primitive Church knew no such Divinity, neither hath its Doctors left any such Volumns.

It may be urged, that seeing the conscience is but a reflex act of the judgment, that as the judgment is an unsure guid, the conscience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *sense* and *custom*: And I my self have seen my Landf. lady, in *France*, as much troubled in conscience for giving us flesh to eat in Lent, as if she had cast out the flesh of a christian to be devoured by dogs; and so Atheisme may attribute to custom, these inclinations whereby we are acted-on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themselves as much prickt in conscience, for transgressing their

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Prophets canons, as we for offending against the moral Law. And thus the adoring of a Deity might have at first been brooded in the council-chamber of a States mans head, and yet might have been, at that time by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wisest pates, worshipped with profound respects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we shall find in it something of instinct previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, pre-supposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entred that fancie first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, and yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especially, it being so remote from *sense*; and for framing of which *idea*, their experience could never furnish a pattern? Conscience then must be something else then
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the fumes of melancholy, or, capricio's of fancie; for else, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can easily conquer all other fancies, would not be so haunted by these pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be meerly ridiculous, and to want all support from reason or experience.

There is another fyle of cases of conscience, which is a Cader of that same family; and these are such cases as were the brood of these late times, which, like Insects and unclean creatures, may be said *generari ex putri materia*: an instance whereof, was that famous Sister, who ask'd if she was oblidge'd to execute her catt for killing a mouse upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old dotting Wives, and studied by State-expectants, who, to gain applause, and in hope to mount Preferment's Saddle, made use of this gilded stirrop. I shall not inveigh against this foppery, se-

ing it hath not posselt mens conceit so long, as to have prescribed the riddle of Divinity ; but, like a meteor, which, because it is fixt to no Orbe, and is but a mass of inflamed vapours, doth therefore disappear immediatly, how soon its substance flashes out ; and its ashes are now entomb'd in the same clay with its brother twain, that pious *Non-sense*, wherein God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not in superior.

The As God did light the candle of a
Scriptures. private conscience, in each private breast ; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures, in the body of His Church ; and these we may call the conscience of the Church, whilst triumphant. Which some, by the breath of their vanity, and stormes of their passion, endeavour to blow out, whilst others, make no other use of its Light, then to shew them where to find a jest. And within the armes of this division, folded

folded, all the prophane race of mankind. As to these first (who should be first, because they are Sathan's first-born, and so deserve a double portion of this reproof) they contend, that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low stile; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions. But these miscreants should consider, that much of the Scriptures native splendor is impaired by its Translators, who, fearing to fall within the verge of the curse pronounced against such as should pair from, or adde to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Translation should want rather the lustre, then meaning of the Original. As also of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits least of a Translation; especially into northern Languages: for as these Nations differ least in their expressions, who, because of their commerce or contigui-

ty, have the most frequent converse. So doubtless, the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, should in language hold the least correspondence. And because there is no pure fountain of this Tongue left, besides the Bible, it must be hard to understand its expressions, wherein the Translators can find little or no help from the variety and collation of Authors. And seing this Book was penn'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations and Sexes, it was fit that its stile should have been condescending: for these who are tall, can pull the fruit which hangs low, whereas these who are low, cannot pull what pearch's high. And it is very observable, that where the fruit is greatest and ripest, there the branch whereon it hangs, bowes lowest. When God appeared to *Elijah*, *Kings* 19. there came first a terrible wind, thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of these, but spoke in the shrill small voice. His divine Providence hath so order'd it, that
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our conviction cannot be ascrib'd to the fard of Eloquence nor flight of Logick, but merely to the truth of what is therein represented: our Saviour, will with clay and spittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did these of the other blind man in the Gospel. And such is the strength of His divine Arme, that He can vanquish Satan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, because it is situated so far above us; So we conclude these truths and excellencies but mean, because they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the faule lurks in our selves, that great Physician will cure us, like an artist, with simples, specifick for our disease, and not like a *Charlatan*, with perfumed and gilded nothings. It is not allwayes the best mettall, which carries the pleasingest *impressa*; nor doth the painted candle cast the clearest light. There are many things in Scripture, which because of our frailty,

frailty, appear (like a staff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be straight. Why *Abraham* should have kill'd his son *Isaac*; or the *Israelites* have borrowed and not restored the egyptian Ear-rings, staggers not my belief: for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to recieve them: and these who obey'd, were no more guilty, then such are, who by order from the Master, recieve what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions, they differ, no doubt, from one another; albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging other-ways. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to convince Hereticks and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precede or follow it.

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As to these others, in whom the wine of God's consolations, (by being winded in the crackt vessels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition : for, that stomach must be very corrupt, wherein the best of aliment putrifies most ; and probably, that indigested milk, being converted in excrementitious bile and humours, may cast them in a feaver which shall never cool to all eternity. I pity likewyses these, who, out of an in-advertent (and as they think, sinless) humour, jest with these divine truths; like foolish children, who love rather to sport with their meat then eat it. These, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it : And we may say of the Bible as of taking of God's name in our mouths, which must not only, not be done upon design, to blaspheme and diffame Him; but must not be taken but upon necessity, and, like the Shew-bread, must be used only when we are in
straits.

straits. I have been too guilty of this last sin my self; and therefore, least I should make no attonement, I have rather resolved to appear before the world, in the dust and sack-cloth of this silly Discourse, a Pen-nance, really, to me very great.

When I consider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all these, they need particular instructions from above the Poles, I admire why there are so many passages in Scripture, from which our necessity may expect no assistance. And therefore, least I should think, that in Scripture there is any waste of words, I am induced to believe, that there runs an allegory in that holy Book from *Genesis* to *John's* Revelation; and that it's mystical sense is that which deserves the name of God's Word. Might we not have admired why the Story of *Hagar* and her bastard is there voluminously described, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul*, *Gal. 4. 24.* had

had not discovered the mystery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, these two mothers are the two Testaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth into bondage, &c. I might here relate many excellent allusions to prove this, but I shall satisfy my self with one which I did read in one Doctor *Everot*; who, preaching upon *Joshua*, 15. 16. *Then Caleb said, he who smiteth Kirjath-sepher and taketh it, even to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And Othniel took it, &c.* saith, that *Caleb* signifies a good heart, *Kirjath-sepher* the city of the Letter, *Achsah* the Vision, *Othniel* God's opportunity. And so the mystical sense runs, a good heart saith, that whoever will take in (and smite, as *Moses* did the rock) the Letter of the word, shall have the vision which lurks under it discovered and given to him. And God's own time is the only mean for accomplishing this: As also, it is most
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remarkable, that that City which was called *Cirjath-sepher* before it was taken in, or, *the city of the Letter*, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which signifies *an oracle*; so that the Word or Letter is no oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the reading of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an hebrew Lexicon, then by a thousand English Lectures.

These who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of miracles, to natural causes, do not much disparage the power of God, but (though against their depraved intention) cry rather up his omnipotency: For certainly, if these miracles were produced by secondary causes, then doubtless, that productive faculty was bestowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce such strange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them himself; as it is more difficult, for a great Master, to form

form curious and admirable Characters when he leads a scholars hand, then when he writes them with his own; for, such help may be called *resisting assistance*. I cannot likewise but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break then open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, suiting with their private designs, then tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear a Presbyterian observe, from the first chapter of *Genesis*, first verse, that whilst *Moses* relates what God made, he speaks nothing of *Bishops*; by which it was evident (said *Don Quixot's* Chaplain) that *Bishops* were not of divine Institution: a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Priest, who hearing *Maria* spoken of for to signifie *Seas*, did brag that he had found the *Virgine Mary* named in the old Testament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worship, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to see a multitude

multitude met together, to confess that there is a God : But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Christ elected Fisher-men to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride : and that *Paul* (the most signal Trophe of our christian Faith) was sent for confirmation, not to *Peter* or *James* at *Jerusalem*, but to *Ananias*, one of the meanest amongst the Disciples. And seing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle ; it is still so much the greater by how much weaker the instruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Olives*, whereon our Saviour's glorious transformation was to be seen, then were Sermons to be honoured ; but, since it is become a mount *Calvar*, whereon our blessed Saviour suffers daily, by scandalous railings, Sermons are now become unfavoury for the most part. I hate to see that divine place made either a Bar, whereat secular quarrels are,
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with passion, pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is, by Satyres, satisfied; or, a School-chair, from which un-intelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced by our infant Divines. I hate none more then that of giving reasons for proving *the Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proven by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proven more convincingly then thus, *my Text says it*: and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adoration, so are they the natural employments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitires skrich and cry, like *Baal's Priests*, as if God were no nearer them then the visible Heavens.

It

The moral Law. It honours much our employment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour styles himself our Advocate. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtless for our advantage and respect, more immediatly the security of the creature than the honour of the Creator, and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature layes upon us all. And albeit I laugh at the jewish Cabala, which sayes, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letters, at the back of a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullian's* wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the prohibition made to *Adam*. There are indeed some sins which scarce a consequence can bring within the verge of these Commandments. As for instance, Drunkenness: Yet, these are such as are so destructive to our nature,

ture, that there needs no Law be made against them. So that the Priest hit wittily, to whom that sin being confess'd, enjoyned as an Pen-nance, their being drunk a second time; which makes me conclude, that if Drunkenness were to be ranged under any of these Laws, it would fall most naturally under that, *Thou shalt not kill*. Albeit the fourth Commandment seems to respect only the honour of God, and that the creature seems to be no wayes bettered by it: Yet, our more serious observation will discover, that all be-labouring creatures, as it were, expect an ease the seventh day more then any other. Whether it be, that nature is by custom framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we see that God choic'd that number to be the year of jubile amongst his own people, and that it is the period of all the several consistencies in our life, infancie, pubertie, &c. And for this reason Physicians observe, that the child born in the se-

venth moneth is stronger then that which is born in the eight ; because in the seventh it is come to a knot, by passing whereof, in the eight it is in a state of imperfection : But, what the mystery of this holy Climate-rick is , I refer till we come to that Sabbath of rest, whereat we ordinarily arrive, after seven times nine years hath snowed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the same day of the week should have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had designed each day by a special terme, and had commanded, that a day of such a designation, should have been sequestered for a Sabbath ; and that by designing only the seventh day He did leave a liberty to employ any day of the seven for that use. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moses* nor the jewish Church durst not attempt the change of their new-years day ; but that the Almighty was pleased to bestow a peculiar sanction upon that alteration :

For,

For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the moneth wherein the *Isac-*lites came from *Egypt* should be, by them, reputed the first moneth of their year. Wherefore, seeing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is something of humour in it as well as of Religion. The *venerious* Mahumetan chooseth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturn's day*; The *warlick* *Parchians* Tuesday, or, *Mars-day*; The *cheery* Europeans *Sunday*. And albeit the Christians are influenc'd only by inspiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which suited best with their natural temper. But this is a meditation which should travel no where beyond a mans private breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws, is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seeing all these Laws are made to shew

our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shewes our contempt of Him who is the author of all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses's* breaking both Tables with one passionat fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been pre-design'd for some hid end, doubtless he had been reprov'd for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might be also argued, that seeing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimately, the advantage of man, that where man is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, then it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting; and
that

that for this cause, *Jacob's* begetting children with his wives maids, is not in Scripture reprov'd as adultery, because they were given to him by her self for that effect: but, seing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it from me to press it further.

Albeit the judicial Law (which *The* may be justly called the judicious *judi-* Law) is commonly reputed to be *cial* but the municipal Law of the Jews; *Law.* yet, seing it was thundered from mount *Sinai* with so much pomp, and is ingroft in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearer related to reason then any other Law, I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations: especially seing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawn, so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it, albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) in directly opposite, situations and stances. Thus

this Law suits even with contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the ceremonial Law is likewise inserted amongst the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the jurisdiction of the Gospel: But, the reason of this seems to be, because these did immediatly concern the jewish Church, and were conversant about these holy things. And so, seing the old Testament is a description of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in these times, I wonder not to see these ceremonies amidst other sacred truths, and yet not observed, seing they are expressly abrogat. But, if the judicial Law, which respected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatour only whilst the jewish State was in being, I admire why the Spirit of God took so much pains, first to penn it, and then to deliver it so Canon-like to posterity. And since it is a principle in Law and reason, that Laws must still stand in vigor

gor till they be exprefly abrogat, and muft not be derogated from by consequences or prefumptions, I admire why this Law, which God hath enervat by no exprefs Text, fhould be now look'd upon as Statutes nowife *a-la-mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the fentence of death againft her; whence fome think, that Church-men, following their Mafters example, fhould not give their fuffrage in criminal cafes, and have only *δίκην ἀναιμακτον*, a bloodlefs Jurifdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurfes, not Chyrurgions. But, it is as true, that our Saviour professed in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His defign in that place was only to convince them of their own finnes, and not to abfolve her, not to abrogat the Law: and therefore He defired him who was freeft from fin, to caft
the

the first stone at her. And whereas it is conjectured, that these words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the clay, immediatly thereafter was an abrogation of that Law; this is a Geomancy more wilde then any lesson which is alledged to have been read in the mysterious face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbies cabalastick Gown. And whereas it is alledged, that there are many precepts in that *corpus juris*, which respects only the humor of the Jews, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and these other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reigns amongst us; and so why not punishable after that same manner? Neither are the humors of these Jews more different from ours, then was the *genius* of the Romans; and yet, few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mould. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man
how

how to be just in his own actions, so He would likewayes instruct him by a judicial Law, how to administrate Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more then that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages, and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the Jews, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessary) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind judgments cannot see a present conveniency, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, then charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes; and are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omniura*
que

que fererunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, neque certa sunt, incerta redderentur; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient, yet, it retains it's vigor till it be abrogat by the same, or a higher Authority, then that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodque eodem modo dissolvi quo colligatum est*. And, seing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Levit. 20. 10. Dent. 22. 22.* where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world
needed

needed not so much to have been acquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death; and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient, we may at last arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogate, by our practice, whatever choaks our present humor.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life, whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flees over then hits the mark at which it is level'd. And if this argument concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that Law,

Law, seing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? For, if *vita & fama* be in Law *equiparat*, by that same Law, *pecunia est alter sanguis*. But, if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the punishment of theft, when it is aggrag'd to it's greatest height, cannot, in their opinion, reach so far as to be capital. Why was it, that by that Law nocturnal theevs might have been killed by those who found them? *Exod. 22. 2*. For, it appears against reason, that more should be permitted to a private and passionat party, then to a dis-interested Judge. And it is clear by 2 *Sam. 12. 5*. that theft was in some cases capital: For, there *David* vows, that he who took his neighbours one sheep, and spared his own many, should surely die; which being spoke by a just King to an excellent Prophet, and not reprov'd, must not be thought a flash of passion, but a well-founded sentence. Were not likewayes two theevs crucified by the

the Jews at the same time with our ever glorious Saviour? which must not be thought a romish execution, seing the Law of the Romans allowed no such punishment for theft: I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather then all thefts, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stollen to satisfie rather hunger then lust) yet, I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases: For certainly, he who steals, may, for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seing to steal what should alimēt any poor one, is, in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted, if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to
love

love our neighbour as our self; and so, since we are commanded not to kill our neighbour, that same Law must likewise forbid our killing of our selves. But the reason probably, why no express Text did forbid that sin, was, because the Spirit of God knew that the natural aversion we have against death, would, in this, do more then supply a Law; and that those who would be so desperate as to neglect the one, would never be so pious as to obey the other. Or else, God hath been unwilling, by making ~~such~~ a Law, to intimate to the world; that such a sin might be committed. Yet, it seems strange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul* and others, to have killed themselves, against whom no check stands registered in holy Records. But, I stop here, intending to bestow a whole Tractat upon the judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

The

The second mirrour, wherein God Almighty is to be seen, is that of His creatures; and in that a *Virtuoso* may contemplat His infinite power, as in the other he may see His admirable justice. It is very observable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove His greatness, the Sun, Orion and the Leviathan, are made use of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God describes the inimitable knowledge of *Solomon*, bestowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favour, he sayes not, that he understood the quirks of Philosophy, or notions of Divinity; but, it is said, that he knew all from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hysope that grows upon the wall. And in earnest, it is strange, that when man comes into the gallery of this World, he should take such pleasure in gazing upon these ill-drawn fictions, which have only past the pencil of humane wit, and should not fix his admiration upon these glorious

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rious creatures, which are the works of that great Master; in framing whereof, God is content to be said to have spent six dayes, to the end, that man might admire the effects of so much pains; whereas His omnipotency might, with one *fiat*, have summoned them all to appear, apparrell'd in these gorgeous dresses which now adorns them. And it is as strange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is such an infinit number of curious tale-duces, to feast his eyes with curiosity, and to furnish his soul with solid knowledge; he should notwithstanding spend so much oyl and sweat, in spinning out *ens rationis, materia prima, potentia obedientialis*, and such like untelligible trash, which, like cob-webs, are but envenomed dust curiously wrought. And because the Gross of mankind was so gross, as not to understand God's greatness by the abstract *idea's* which instinct presented to him: Therefore, to teach
that

that sensual croud, by the trunch-
manrie of sense He hath bestowed
upon them this mirrour, wherein
they may see how infinit He is in
power, who made *Nothing* so fruit-
full, as to bud forth in this glorious
crop of creatures, which now inha-
bits the surface of heaven and earth.

I admire that such Philosophers *Mon-*
as have had their faces wash'd at the *sters.*
font, can allow of Monsters, and de-
fine them to be the preter-intention-
al works of nature, wherein nature
miss'd of her design, and was not
able to effectuat what she intended:
For, if *nature* and *providence* sig-
nifie the same thing in the Dictio-
nary of christianity, it were blas-
phemy to think, that *providence*
could not be able to effectuat what
it once designed. All the creatures
are indeed but as clay in the hand of
this great Potter; but, it were im-
pious to think, that His art can be
mistaken in framing any Vessel:
wherefore, I am apter to believe, that

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all

all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions, then errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without design, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weakness. Neither term I an Hermaphrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it, no more then I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously an exact Marmaid, resolved to draw either a woman or fish, and not one distinct creature, pecc'd up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from mans vanity; who concluded, that every frame which answered not that *idea*, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, and not of *nature*; as if *nature* had been obliged to leave in the bibliothick of his head, the Original of all such Peeces as was to pass it's press.

Seing

Seing God, in His survey of the Creation, called all that He had made *good*, because they were usefull, I conclude, that these are the best which are the most usefull. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance, in preferring a diamond to a capon or sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures: For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinat for some use, and seing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yet, can I not allow of these gaudy compounds, which men creat to themselves; as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished; wherein man could supply God, and art, nature. The bestowing a hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans, that money, which oppression did at first

most unjustly screw from their weary hands. It is our ignorance of nature's mysteries which perswads us, that some, if not most of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, then for supplying necessity, an error which experience daily confutes : So, these herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy growes no where but where the disease rages, which is cured by it : Seing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man, these two being correspondents ; and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or musick to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Joppa* or *China*, to satisfie their curiosity ; there being a *Tredaskins* closet in each Tulip, and a *Solomon's* Court in each Lilly of the field. And seing mens tempers are so various,

it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his use) should have been made proportional to his humor : But , seing art hath in many things copied nature to the life, I think not the Symetrie nor variety to be seen amongst the creatures such an infallible argument for proving the being of a God. As is *instinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfit ; and herein is it, that that grand Magician must acknowledge the finger of his Maker, seing here his own art fails.

These who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not understand wherein its Symetrie consists. All the strings of an Instrument sound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony : the face of the earth looks in some places deform'd and parcht ; and yet it is there the mother of rich mines (as if God intended to bestow a great portion where He bestowes an ill face) and what we think deformities , were placed

there as patches, and are no more blemishes, then the spots are to the Leopards.

I confess, that at first it puzzl'd much my enquiry, for what end these mountains were made so near neighbours to the devided clouds: and I once imagin'd, that these were rather the effects of the flood, then creatnres at first intended; and were but the rubbish and mud which these impetuous waters had heap'd up in a mass: But, I was thereafter dissuaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wisdom, proving it's antiquity, sayes, that it was with God before the heavens were prepared, and the mountains setled; by the scope of which Text, it is clear, that the heavens, hills, and the rest of the Creation, are said to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreseeing that the lust of conquest would, like the needle of the Compass, look oft north; as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (first the Assyrian,

syrian, then Grecian, then Roman, now German) did therefore bound ambition, as it were, with high hills, (albeit since, ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they should march no further. Thus, it is very observable, that the northern parts of one Kingdom are alwayes more barren then the southern limits of the Country which lyes to the north of it. The north of *England* more mountainous and barren then the south of *Scotland*, albeit it ly nearer the Sun ; the south of *England* more pleasant and fertile then the north of *France* ; and the south of *France* then the north of *Italy*, &c.

We must likewayes consider, that nature brused it's face so when it fell in *Adam*, that it did then contract many of these blemishes which now deform it ; and that as it waxes old, it's native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by it's present distempered

perd condition, wherein it groans and travelleth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

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his
crea-
tion.*

The third mirrour, wherein God is to be admired, is *man*. This is that noble creature which God was pleased to mould last of all others, not willing to bring him home, till, by the preceeding Creations, He had plenished his house abundantly for him. And albeit in the creation of all other creatures, it is only said, that God spoke, and it was: Yet, when man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of heaven was call'd. and it is said (*let us*) as if more art had been to be shewed here, then in all the remanent Fabrick of the terraqueous Glob, and glorious Circles of heaven. It is likewise very obser-

observable, that albeit all the fishes of the sea were formed by one word, all the beasts of the field by one act, &c. Yet, God was pleased to bestow two upon the creation of man; by the first, his body was created out of the dust, and thereafter, was breathed in, his soul. And albeit transient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet, the history of mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen*, 1. 27. and again, 2. 7. And, least that foreseen deformity, wherewith he was to be besmear'd after his fall, should make it be questioned, that at his first creation he had received the *impressa* of God's Image, this is oft repeated: For, in the 26. *ver. Gen*. 1. it is said, *Let us make man in our image*; and then again, *and after our likeness*. And in the 27. *verse*, *So God created man in his own image*; and again immediately thereafter, *in the image of God created he him*. Yet, I am confident, that this image is so bedabled in the mire of sin, and so chattered

chattered by it's first fall, and this divine *impressa*, and print, so worn out, by our old and vicious habits, that, if this genealogy had not been so oft inculcat, we could not but have called it in question, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a descent so royal and sublime. Wherefore I must again admire the folly of Atheists, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birth-right.

But, albeit man be made after God's image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after man's image, or represented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphits foolishly contend, no more, then if we should conclude, that because a Copy may be taken off an Original, therefore an Original may be taken off a Copy. Neither is this representation salv'd from being idolatry, by alleaging, that the image is not worshiped, but God, who is represented by it: For, it hath been well observed by an ancient Father, that idolatry in
Scripture

Scripture is called adultery, And it is no good excuse for an adulteress, that she did ly with another because he represented her husband to her, and resembled him as a Copy doth it's Original: Yet, seing nothing is room'd in our judgment and apprehension, but what first entred by the wicket of sense, it is almost impossible for man to conceive the *idea* of any thing but vested with some shape, as each man's private reflections will abundantly convince him,

As the boundless Ocean keeps and shews it's well drawn images, whilst it stands quiet, with a face polisht like a cristal cake, but losses them immediately, how soon it's proud waves begin to swell and in rage, to spit it's froathy foam in the face of the angry heavens; so, whilst a stoical indolency and christian repose smooths our restless spirits, it is only then, that the soul of man can be said to retain that glorious image of God Almighty, with which it
was

was impress'd at it's created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be discerned in him, then the shadows and representations of in-looking objects are to be seen and discerned in the disquieterd bosom of the troubled waters.

*The
im-
mor-
tality
of the
soul.*

The stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actings, creates to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by these ominating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul: and seeing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastick fits, followed by sutable events; why may we not likeways believe its predictions, as to its own immortality, it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to what end would
the

the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be staid in a condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have sureable rewards or punishments? Moreover, seing God is just, He will punish and reward: and therefore, seing He punishes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there must be doubtless a future state wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgment most of this truth, is, that the noblest Souls, and the sharpest sighted do, of all others, most desire the state of separation, and have the weakest attaches to this life; which must doubtless proceed from an assurance of immortality, and that it hath, from the *Pilgrimage* of its contemplation, got a view of the spiritual *Canaan*: For, seing the brutishest of creatures abhors annihilation, as the most averfable ill in nature, doubtless the soul of man, which is the most divine of all creatures,

tures, would never appete this separation, if by it it were to be extinct, and to be no more. And how absurd were it to believe, that man's soul should be made after God's image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As also, how can the soul be thought to perish with the body, seing these accidents which destroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a feaver burn, or rheums drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, seing man's least peccadilio against God Almighty, is against one who is infinit, were it not absurd to think, that it could be proportionally punished in the swift glass of man's short life? then which, nothing is more finit, or sooner finished.

As the soul is God's Image, So it's products are the images of His admirable operations. Do not Mathematicians creat eagles, doves, and such like automata's? And spring
not

not flowers from the Chimists glasses? And thus art, which is man's offspring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanship of the Almighty: and therefore, seing the soul can with one thought grasp both the Poles, can dart out it's conceits as far as the furdest borders of the imaginary spaces, creat worlds, and order, and disorder, all that is in this which is already created; it's strange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a mass of blood, it's actings would be lent and dull, neither could it's motions be so nimble and winged, as are these of our agile spirits. It were impossible for our narrow heads, to inn all these innumerable *idea's* (which are now in them) if these were all corporeal, and if these be not corporeal, that which produces them must be doubtless incorporeal, seing *simile generatur à simili*; and dull flesh and blood could never produce such spiritual emanations.

As the soul is God's Image, so in this it resembles Him very much, that we can know nothing of it's nature without it's own assistance: like a dark lanthron, or a spy, it discovers every thing to us, except it self. And because it refuses us the light of it's candle, whilst we are in the quest of it's mysteries; therefore it is, that our re-searches of it's nature are gropeings in the dark: and so oftentimes vain, if not ridiculous. *Avicenna, Averroes*, and the remanent of that Arabian tribe, admiring it's prodigious effects, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels; as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewayes thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive creatures, but that the churlishness of their mater will not suffer them to entertain such pure irradiations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the soul's interest to admit

admit of any such *idea's* : For, as it tends more to the Artists praise to cause his products move from hid and internall springs, then from extrinſick cauſes ; as we ſee in Watches and ſuch like. So it is more for the honour of that great Artiſt, and more ſuteable to the being and nature of His creatures, that all it's operations flow from it ſelf, then from aſſiſting but exterior co-ad-jutors : which makes me averſe from *Ariſtotele's* opinion of the motion of the ſpheres by intelligences. And it were abſurd to think, that men ſhould be blamed or praiſed for thoſe effects which their aſſeſſour Angels could only be charged with. The *Platonicks* alleaged, that all ſouls exiſted before their incarceration in bodies ; iin which ſtate of pre-exiſtence, they were doted with all theſe ſpiritual endowments, which ſhall attend them in the ſtate of ſeparation : and that at their firſt allyance with bodies, their native knowledge, was clouded,

ἐπιστημὴν ἀναβολήν, with the putting off knowledge for a time, till, by a *remiscentia*, their intellectuals revived, as by a resurrection. And *Origen* added, that these souls were, according to their escapes, committed in the state of their primitive separation, yoked with better or worse bodies; a shift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehension of God's being unjust, for infusing innocent souls, in bodies which would infect them; and by drawing them in inevitable snares, at last condemn them, or at least their infusion was the imprisoning these who were not guilty; a difficulty which straits much, such as maintain that the soul is not *ex traduce*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to discover.

It may be, that the *Stoicks* mistake in making the souls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that universal *anima mundi* (by which they

they doubtless meant God Himself) was occasioned by a mistake of that Text, that *God breathed into man's nostrils, the breath of life*: concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it, So the soul behoved to be a part of that divine essence, from which, by a second consequence, they concluded, that the soul, being a part of that divine being, could not suffer, nor undergo any torments; as is asserted by *Seneca, epist. 29. Cicero, 1usc. 5.* and defended by their successors, these primitive hereticks, the *Gnosticks, Manichees* and *Priscillianists*. But this bastard is not worth the fostering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity, and is doubtless a false and flattering testimony given by the soul to it self: For, seeing the soul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, then the picture should be reputed a part of the Painter.

Aristotle (like the devil (who because he knows not what to answer, answers ever in engines) tells us, that *anima* is ε. τελεχεια, a terme fitted to exercise the empty brains of curious Pedants, and apter to begget, then explicat difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, then the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last; So that his arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man, as well as three: But, seing he, and many of his disciples, believe these to be three and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is as apposit an emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being askt, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three plates, and there-

thereafter drew out all the three in one.

As the herauldrie of our reason cannot blazen the souls *impressa*; So can it not help us to line out it's descent: and such would appear to be the excellency of that noble creature, that heaven and earth seem to contend, the which shall be the place of it's nativity. Divines (who are obliged to contend for heaven, because they are it's more immediat Pensioners) will have it to be created and infused: whereas Philosophers (ambitious to have so noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which aliments their sublime meditations) contend, that it is *extraduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twinne. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accomplish'd the Creation the first seven dayes, and that nature did then pass child-bearing: Yet, that, in my judgment, must be meant of the Creation of whole *species*, and not of *individuals*, and to press the souls

not traduction ; I shall lend only one argument, not because it is the best, but because it is my own. We see, that there where the soul is confess'd to be *ex traduce*, as in bruits and vegetative creatures, that nature, as it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are still as rapacious and roaring as were their Syers, from whose loyns they descended : and the Rose being pous'd up by the salt nitre which makes it vegetative, spreads the same leaves, and appears with the same blushes or palenets that beautified it's eye-pleasing predecessors. The reason of which continual assimilation, preceeds from the seeds, having in it's bosome, all these qualities and shap^s, which appear thereafter in it's larger products, whereof they were but a *mappe* or *index*. Whereas man relembles never, at least not oft, these who are called his parents ; the vicious and tall father, having oft low, but virtuous children ; which shows, that
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the soul of man is not derived by generation, and that the soul bestowed upon the son's body, is most different and asymbolick to that which lodged in the father. And this may be further confirmed by that excellent passage, *Prov. 20. 27*, where it is said, *that the understanding of man is the candle of the Lord*. Our soul is God's Image, and none can draw that Image but Himself; we are the stamp of His divine nature, and so can only be formed by Himself, who is the glorious Seal.

From this divine principle, that man's soul is made after God's Image, I am almost induced to believe, that *prophecie* is no miraculous gift bestowed upon the soul at extraordinary occasions only, but is a natural (though the highest) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the stamp, to have impress'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal, then it must be natural to the soul, which is God's *impressa*, to have a faculty of
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of foreseeing, since that is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely be-dimm'd and worn off; as also, we know by experience, that men upon death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act like it self, do foresee and foretell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason do I think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if sagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man, if he were rehabilitat in the former state of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary assistance, foresee and prophesie? For, there is not such a distance betwixt that foresight and prophesie, as is betwixt the two states of innocency and corruption, according to the received notion, which men have settled to themselves

selves of that primitive state of innocency.

From the same principle, may it likewise be deduced, that natural reason cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is possible, the glorious nature of God Almighty : He hath doubtless lighted this candle, that we might, by it, see Himself; and how can we better know the Seal, then by looking upon it's impression. And if Religion and it's mysteries, cannot be comprehended by reason, I confess it is a pretty jest, to hear such frequent reasonings amongst Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reason* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Esau*, whereof the younger only hath the blessings, and are, by Divines, placed at the two opposite points of the Diameter; yet, upon an unbyassed inquiry, it will appear, that *faith* is but sublimated reason, calcin'd by that divine chymical fire of Baptisme; and that the soul of man hath lurking in it,
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all these vertues and faculties which we call Theological; such as *faith, hope and repentance*: for else *David* would not have prayed, *Enlighten, Lord, my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord bestow new eyes upon me*. Neither could the opening of *Lidea's* heart, have been sufficient for her conversion, if these pre-existing qualities had not been treasur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that these holy flames lurk under the ashes of corruption, untill God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it listeth) sweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the first Creation, doth not in His regeneration super-add any new faculty (for else the soul had not at first been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

Faith and reason I am alwayes ashamed, when I hear reason call'd the step-mother of faith, and proclaimed rebel against God

God Almighty, and such declared traitors, as dare harbour it, or appear in it's defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remorest objects; and are as injult as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorc'd from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put out the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against the rockie walls of despair; but should rather wash it's glasses with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever since *faith* and *reason* have been, by Divines, set by the ears, the brutish multitude conclude, these who are most reasonable to be least religious; and the greatest spirits to be least spiritual: a conceit most inconsistent with that divine parable, wherein these who received the many talents improved them to the best advantage, whilst he who had
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but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is most improbable, that God would choose low shrubs, and not tall Cedars, for the building of His glorious Temple. And it is remarkable, that God, in the old Law, refused to accept the first born of an ass in sacrifice, but not of any other creature. And some, who were content to be call'd *Atheists*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage in this of the *Rabbes* ignorance, and authorized by their devilish invention, what was at first but a mistake: and this unriddles to us that mystery, why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest Atheists.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinn'd before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature. I am induced to believe, that the body is rather unjustly bamed for being, then that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath in
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this, cunningly laid over upon it's fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh or blood have upon that which is immaterial, no more sure then the case hath upon the Watch, or the heavens upon it's burgesing Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcasle, fit nor able for nothing. I believe, that the body being a clog to it, mny slow it's pursue after spiritual objects, and that it may occasion, indirectly, some sins of omission: For, we see palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never understand, how such dumb Orators, as flesh and blood, can perswade the soul to commit the least sin. And thus, albeit our Saviour sayes, that *flesh and blood did not teach Peter to give him his true Epithets*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual sin to these pithless causes. And scing our first sin hath occasioned all our
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after sinning, certainly, that which occasioned our first sin was the main source of sinning, and this was doubtless the soul; for, our first sin being an immoderate desire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our spirit, because it was a spiritual sin; whereas if it had been gluttony, lust or such like, which seems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this contest, I am of opinion, that the soul wins the cause, because it is the best Orator.

The

fall of
Angels.

What was the occasion of the first ill, is much debated (and most deservedly) amongst Moralists; for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil, seeing that which works mischief cannot be called good. Nor can we ascribe the efficiency of the first evil to evil: for then the question recurs, what was the cause of that evil? And by this, the supposition is likewise destroyed, whereby the evil enquired after,

after, is supposed to be the first evil : but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that first sin, whereby they forfeited their glory ? we will find this disquisition most mysterious. And it is commonly believ'd, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride caus'd their fall; and that they catcht their bruise in climbing, in desiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow creatures. Yet, this seems to me most strange, that these excellent spirits whose very substance was light, and who surpassed far, man, in capacity and understanding, should have so err'd as to imagine, that equality faisable, a fancy which the fondest of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to say, that their error could have sprouted at first from their understanding; and to think it to have been so gross, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their first error was rather a

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crookedness in their will, then a blindness in their judgment, and that they fretted to see man, whom they knew to be inferiour to themselves by many stages, made Lord of all that pleasant Creation, which they gazed on with a staring maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, because this Sin was the far more bating, seing it appeared with all the charmes, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could busk it; and explicats better to us the occasion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath alwayes since pursued silly man: But, whether God will save just as many believers as there fell of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Statuit terminos gentium, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei.* But, if it please God so to order it, it will doubtless aggrage their punishment, by rackling their disdain.

And seing the Angels have never obtained a remission for this crime,
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it is probable, that the correspondent of their sin is, in us, the sin against the holy Ghost.

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For, if their *lapse* had been pardonable, some one or other of them had in all probability escap'd ; but, if this was not that unpardonable sin, I scarce see where it shall be found. For, to say that it is a hating of God, as *God*, is to make it unpracticable rather than unpardonable : For, all creatures appetite naturally what is good, and *God*, as *God*, is good ; So that it is impossible that He can be hated under that reduplication.

It may be likewise conjectured, that voluntar and deliberate sacrifice is the sin against the holy Ghost ; because *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, in with-holding from the Church, a part of the price for which they sold their lands, are, by *Peter*, said to have lied, not to man, but to the holy Ghost ; and his wife is there said to have tempted the Spi-

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rit : but, seing both of them resolved to continue in the Church (a resolution inconsistent with the sin against the holy Ghost) And seing many sins are more heinous, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghost to be any thing else, but a sin against light, in which most penitents have been involved ; albeit, I confess, this was a gross escape, seing it rob'd God of His *omniscieney*, and supposed that He was not privy to such humane actings as have not the Sun for a witness. I do then conclude, that the sin against the holy Ghost may rather be a resolute undervaluing of God, and a scorning to receive a pardon from Him : and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverable, and like the flaming sword, defends them from their re-entry into that Paradise from which they exile. And albeit to say, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may suit abundantly well with His unstainable justice ; yet,
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it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgment place the unpardonableness of this sin, not in God's Decree, but in their obduration and rebellious impenitency : And the reason why these who commie this sin are never pardoned, is, because a pardon is never sought. That place of Scripture, wherein *Eſau* is ſaid to have ſought the bleſſing with tears and not to have found it, aſtoniſhes me : Yet, I believe, that if his tears had ſteamed from a ſenſe of his guilt more then of his puniſhment, doubtleſs he had not weept in vain ; and in that he tear'd, he was no more to be pitied, far leſs pardoned, then a Malefactor, who, upon the ſcaffold, grants ſome few tears to the importunity of his tortures, but ſcornes to acknowledge the guilt of his crime : *for, pain, by contracting our bodies, ſtrains out that liquid mater, which thereafter globs it ſelf in tears :* there could come no holy water from the pagan

font of *E/aw's* eyes ; and if his remorse could have pierc'd his own heart, it had easily pierc'd heaven. Whilst others admire, I bless God, that He hath closed up the knowledge of that unpardonable sin under his own privy Seal : for, seeing Sathan tempts me to sin with the hopes of an after-pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the sin to which I am tempted, is that sin which can expect no pardon. And albeit it be customary amongst men, to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers ; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sailing necessary : But, seeing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no further then by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

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That first sin whereby our first ^{Man's} Parents forfeited their primitive ex-^{fall.} cellencies, was so pitifull a frailty, that I think we should rather lament, then enquire after it. To think that an aple had in it the seeds of all knowledge, or that it could assimilate him to his Creator, and could, in an instant, sublimate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of so mean a Precept was punish'd with such appearing rigor, because, the easier the command was, the contempt was proportionally the greater; and the first crimes are by Legislators punished, not only for guilt, but for example: But, I rather admire what could persuade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even stored with all humane knowledge: For, besides

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that, we have no warrant from Scripture for this alleadgiance, this his easie escape speaketh far otherwayes.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect; yet, that inferres not that man was furnished with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon, God, wherein we see these are exactest, whose judgments are least pestered with terrestrial knowledge, and least diverted with unnecessar speculations. And thus it appears, that these Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of the rational soul, but are rather toyish babies busk't up by fal'n man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect, but that He sought out to Himself many inventions*, where perfection and invention seem to be
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stated as enemies ; and it is palpable, that these Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are such, as were inconsistent with that state of innocency , such as Law , Theology and Physick. And as for the rest, it is absur'd to think , that *Adams* happiness did consist in the knowledge of these things which we our selves account either impertinent or superfluous. But, that which convinces me most of this, is, that we forfeited nothing by *Adam's* fall which *Christ's* death restores not to us ; wherefore, seing *Christ* by his own , or his Apostles promises, hath not assured us of any sub-lunary or school knowledge ; nor hath our experience taught us , that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints, I almost believe, that *Adam* neither posselt these before , nor yet lost them by his fall. Neither think I *St. Paul* the more imperfect, that he desired to know nothing but *Christ* and Him crucified : So that the difference betwixt *Adam* and his

his successors, stood more in the straightness of his affections, then in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed, that the names whereby he baptised the creature, were full histories of their natures written in short hand; yet, this is but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civil error in the Jewish Talmudists, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him see that there were none amongst them fit to be his companion, nor none so beautiful as *Eve*, then it is in their Cabalists to observe, that the hebrew word, signifying *man*, doth, by a transposition of letters, signify likewise *benediction*, and the word signifying *woman*, makes up *male-diction*. If we should take a character of *Adam's* knowledge from the Scriptures, we shall find more imprudence charged upon him then upon any of his successors: For, albeit the silly woman was not deceived without the help of subtilty,

tilty; yet, *Adam* sinned upon a bare suggestion, and thereafter was so simple, as to hide himself when God called him to an account, as if a thicket of trees could have sconced him from his all-seeing Maker; and when he was accused, was so simple, as to think his wives commands sufficient to exoner him, and so absurd, as to make God Himself sharer with him in his guilt. *the woman whom thou gavest me, &c.*

There is more charm in acquiring new knowledge, then in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the *species* of known objects did corrupt, by being treasur'd up in our brains) And this induces me to believe, that our scantness of native knowledge, is rather a happiness then a punishment; the Citizens of *London* or *Paris* are not so tickled by the sight of these stately Cities, as strangers who were not born within their walls, and I may say to such, as by
spelling

spelling the Starres desire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour said to *Peter*, when he was desirous to know the horoscope of the beloved Apostle, *What is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correspondence kept amongst the Planets, and to understand the whole anatomy of natures *skeleton*; in gazing upon whose parts, we are oft times as ridiculous as children, who love to leaf over taliduce Pictures; for in both variety is all the usury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this small mass of our present knowledge, we shall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertilest fountains of our misery: For, do not such as know that they are sick, groan more heavily then a countrey Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity creat in him some sense? And doubtless the reason why children and idiots endure more, and drunken men escape mo dangers

dangers then others, is, because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel then we are. Are not these who understand that they are affronted, more vex'd then such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? and these who foresee the changes and revolutions, which are to befall either their friends or their countries, are thereby more sadly diseased, then he who sees no further then his nose? Our Saviour wept when He did foresee, that one stone of *Jerusalem* should not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Elisba* why he wept, he told him, it was because he did foresee what mischief *Hazael* was to do in *Is-ra-el*. Let us not then complain of the loss of *Adam's* knowledge, but of his innocency; we know enough to save us, and what is more then that, is superfluous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the first sinner, for *Eve* sinned before

before him ; So that albeit it seem a paradox , yet it is most probable, that albeit *Adam* had for ever abstained from eating the *forbidden fruit* , his posterity had been still as miserable as now they are ; seeing the guilt of either of the Parents had been sufficient to taint the innocency of the children. For, as the Scripture tells us , who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others speaks most expressly of original sin, layes the guilt upon her and confesseth only, that his mother had conceived him in sin.

As *Adam* was not the first sinner, So the eating of the aple may be justly thought not to be the first sin ; *Eve* having , before his eating the aple , repeated most falsely the Command : For, whereas God did assure them, that in that day they did eat the fruit, they should surely die, *Eve* relates it thus, *Ye shall not eat the fruit, least ye die*, representing only that as contingent which

was most certain : and whereas God had only said, *ye shall not eat of the fruit of the tree*, Eve sayes, God said, *ye shall not touch it* ; which it may be furnish'd the serpent his argument to cheat her, ye see God hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not then be eaten without hazard ? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other. But to abstract from this, it cannot be said, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the first sin ; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he behoved both to believe the Serpent and misbelieve his Maker, and thus *mis-belief* was the first sin : For, after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and so he did not eat the apple till after his fall. What wiser are these Divines, who debate, whether *Adams* falling-sickness and sin had become hereditary, if our predecessors had come out of his loins before he sin'd, then these who combated

bated for the largest share of the King of *Spains* gold, if it had been to be devided?

In the Almightyes procedure against poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreseeing, that man might sharpen the ax of justice too much upon the whet-stone of private revenge, seems to have, in this process, formed to him, an exact model of inquisition. For, He arraigns and cites *Adam*, *Adam, where art thou?* He shews him his dittay, *Hast thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto, did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could escape His omniscieny, and that He did see *Adam* eat the aple, yet, to teach Judges that they should walk according to what is proven, and not according to what they are themselves conscious to, He did not
condemn

condemn him till first he should have a confession from his own mouth. And thus, Gen. 18. 21. the Lord sayes, *Because the cry of Sodom is great—I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, &c.* And in the last place, albeit the fatal decree did bear, *in that day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, yet, were his dayes prolonged a hundred and thirty years after the sin was committed.

It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be mercifull, mercy being the mitigation of justice, of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seeing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought in any thing which He wills to recede from justice, and so can no more properly be said to be mercifull, then one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

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The *vatican* of paganism can-
 stile of not, for the male-ness of it's stile,
 Ge- match that matchless Book of *Ge-*
 nesis. *nesis*, whereof each sentence seems a
 quarry of rich meditations, and each
 word a spell, sufficient to conjure
 the devil of *Delphos*. Might not
 that excellent expression, *Let us*
make man after our image, convince
 any of the being of a Trinity, who
 deny plurality of Gods. It is won-
 derfull, that the Saturn-humour'd
 Jew can, in this Passage, mis-take his
 own Saviour; and it is strange that
 he should not, from the triangular
 architecture of his own heart, con-
 clude the Trinity of the God-head,
 whose temple it was appointed to
 be. Albeit I be an admirer of this
 nurse of Cabalism; yet, I approve
 not the conceit of these doting
 Rabbies, who teach, that God from
 His own mouth, dited both the
 words and mater of the *Pentateuch*;
 whereas, He furnish'd only to the
 other Prophets the mater and sub-
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ject unphrased : for , not only did God promise , that He should put His words in their mouths, but likewise, they preface thus their own prophecies, In the dayes of such a King, the Word of the Lord came to such a Prophet, saying, &c. Neither is this conceit consistent with that high esteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moses* ; seing it allows him less trust from his divine Master , then the other Pen-men of Scripture had reposed in them.

That brain hath too little *pia ma- wby*
ter, that is too curious to know why *man*
 God, who evidences so great a desire *fell.*
 to save poor man , and is so power-
 full, as that his salvation needed ne-
 ver have run the hazard, if His infinit
 wisdom had so decree'd, did yet suf-
 fer him to fall : For, if we enter once
 the lists of that debate , our reason
 is too weak to bear the burden of
 so great a difficulty. And albeit it
 may be answered , that God might
 have restrained man , but that re-
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strait did not stand with the freedom of mans will which God had bestowed upon him ; yet , this answer stops not the mouth of the difficulty. For certainly , if one should detain a mad man from running over a precipice , he could not be thereby said to have wronged his liberty : and seing man is by many Divines allowed a freedom of will, albeit he must of necessity do what is evil, and that his freedom is salv'd by a liberty to choose only one of moe evils , it would appear strange why his liberty might not have consisted well enough with a moral impossibility of sinning, and might not have been abundantly conserved in his freedom to choose one of moe goods : yet, these reasonings are the calling God to an account , and so impious. For , if God had first created man , surrounded with our present infirmities , could we have complained ? Why then should we now complain, seing we are but faln to a better estate then we deserved ;
seing

seeing we stumbled not for want of light, but because we extinguish'd our own light, and seeing our Saviours dying for us may yet re-instate us in a happier estate then that from which we are now faln.

Albeit the glasse of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curiosity I have to know the different *limbo's* of departed souls and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of courage to encounter this king of terrors, though I were a pagan: But, when I consider what joyes are prepared for them who fear the Almighty, and what craziness attends such as sleep in *Metbujelams* cradle, I pity them who make *long-life* one of the ofttest repeated petitions of their *Pater noster*; and yet these sure are the more advanc'd in folly, who desire to have their names enshrin'd after death in the airy monument of *fame*: Whereas it is one of the promises made to the Elect, *that they shall rest from their labours,*

hours, and their works shall follow them. Most mens mouths are so foul, that it is a punishment to be much in them : for my own part, I desire the same good offices from my good name that I do from my cloaths, which is to skreen me from the violence of exteriour accidents.

As these Criminals might be judg'd distracted, who being condemned to die, would spend their short reprival in disputing about the situation and fabrick of their gibbets ; So may I justly think these *literati* mad, who spend the short time allotted them for repentance, in debating about the seat of hell, and the torments of tortur'd spirits. To satisfie my curiositie, I was once resolv'd, with the Platonick, to take the promise of some dying friend, that he should return and satisfie me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven ; yet I was justly afraid, that he might have return'd me the same answer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, have they

they not Moses and the Prophets?
if they hear not them, wherefore will
they be perswaded though one should
rise from the dead?

The *Millenar's* ephimerides, which ^{The} assures us, that Christ shall reign a Mil-
thousand years with the Saints on ^{lenar-} earth, is as sensual an opinion as that ^{ries} of the *Turks*, who make heaven a ^{refut-} bordell, wherein we shall satisfie our
venerious appetites; for the one
shews the vain glory and vindictive
humour of the Saints, as palpably as
the other shews the lust of the Ma-
hometans. If Christs reigning som a-
ny years be for convincing the world
that he is the real *Messiah*, their
heresie should have ante-dated his
coming; and his reign should rather
have begun long since, when many
ages were to be converted, or at least
it should not have been thrust out
upon the selvage and border of time,
when very few shall remain to be
convinc'd: and if in this they intend a
displaying of Christs glory, certain-

ly they are mistaken; for what honour can it be for a King, to have his footstool made his Throne? So that I think, these poor Phanaticks have taken the patronage of this error rather by necessity than choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly pre-engaged to other Authors.

The As I am not able, by the *Jacobs-*
Au- *ladder* of my merits, to scale hea-
thors ven, So am I less able, by the *Jacobs-*
cen- *staffe* of my private ability, to take
sure up the true altitude of its mysteries.
of this *Essay*, I have travell'd no further in Theo-
and *logy* then a *Sabbath-dayes* journey;
an ac- and therefore, it were arrogance in
count me to offer a map of it to the cre-
of his *design* dulous world: But, if I were wor-
thy to be consulted in these spiri-
tual securities, I should advise every
private Christian, rather to stay still
in the barge of the Church with the
other Disciples, then by an ill bridled
zeal, to hazard crowning alone with
Peter, by offering to walk upon the
unstable

unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which sayes, that the wise men who come to bow before our Saviours cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no wayes concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet sound Christian, who would not even in these bow the flag of his private opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our mother, and therefore we should wed no opinion without her consent who is our parent; or if we have rashly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my self, my vanity never prompted me to be standard-bearer to any, either new Sect, or old Heresie; and I pity such as love to live like Pew-keepers

keepers in the house of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a room for themselves. If there be any thing in this Discourse which may offend such as are really pious, it shall much grieve me, who above all men honours them most. What I have spoken against cases of Conscience and the like, strikes not against their Christian fellowship and correspondence, but against the apish fopperies of pretending counterfeits. It shall alwayes be my endeavour for the future, rather to drop tears for my own sins and the sins of others, then yrk for their conversion: our prayers help such as never heard them, whereas these only who read our discourses are better'd by them. *Abrabams* prayers prevailed more with God (even for *Sodom*) then *Lot's* re-iterated Sermons; and no wonder that the success be unequal, seing in the one we have to do with a mercifull God, whereas in the other we must perswade a hard-hearted people.

I intend not to purchase from posterity the title of *Reformer*, seeing most of these have fallen under the same guilt; and have had the same fate, with that curious Painter, who having drawn an excellent *face*, as happily as could have been expected from the smoothest mirror, did thereafter dash it afresh upon the suggestion of each intrant, till at last he reformed it from being any way like to the Original.

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that these being invented by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the omniscient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is most remarkable, that our Saviours Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by His Apostles, were roomed up in far narrower bounds than these of our times, which an hidropsie of ill-concocted opinions hath swell'd beyond their true dimensions: many where-
of

of have either been brooded by *vanity* or *interest* ; or else ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by such as impugn'd their resolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to assert these by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets* ; and having once floored them, have thereafter judg'd themselves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholastic honour. Some well-meaning Christians likewyses, do sometimes, for maintenance of what is lawfull and pious, think, that they may lawfully advance opinions, which otherwayes they would never have allowed of ; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the further from one another, So opposition makes both parties fly into extremeties. Thus I believe, that the debates betwixt *Roman-catholicks* and *Protestants*, concerning the *Virgin Mary*, have occasion'd, in some amongst both, expressions, if not hereticall, yet aleast undecent. Thus a
great

great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noahs Ark*, a recepracle of clean and unclean ; and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinar dyals, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all it's Ptecepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it ; and whose conventicles, compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of these who live a part, because they are sick of the plague.

I am not at a maze, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion ; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion, and if by accident he entertain any of these many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith* is

is above *reason*, or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country runs it counter, seeing he is taught even by them, that the principles of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seeing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see even the best temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My design all alongst this Discourse, butts at this one principle, *that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous then sincere Practice.* It is in Religion as in Herauldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancients. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impressions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob*

and

and *Eſau*, divide and jar as ſoon as they are born : and betwixt whom, the poor propoſition, out of which both did ſpring, is like a malefactor, moſt lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavour'd to demonſtrate, that dogmaticalneſs and paralitick ſcepticiſme, are but the *Apocrypha* of true Religion ; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a cockatrice : For the Sceptick perceiving, that the magiſterial dogmatist erres (as theſe muſt erre ſomewhere who aſſert too much) even in theſe things whereof he affirms, he is as ſure, as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary ſtile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby emboldned to contravert all. This being the ſcope of this Eſſay, I wiſh that theſe who read it would expound it as Divines do parables, *Quæ non ſunt argumentativa ultra ſuum ſcopum.*

I doubt not but ſome will think me no leſs abſurd in writing againſt vanity,

*His
Apo-
logy.*

nity, whilst I am so vain my self as to write Books, then the Philosophers were judged of old, for denying motion whilst their tongues mov'd in their cheek; but, to these my answer shall be, that finding many grovelling in their errors, I have, in this Essay, proffer'd them my assistance, not to shew my *strength* but my *compassion*. The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads, yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtless accuse my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations so excentrick to my employment; to these my return is, that these papers are but the pairings of my other Studies, and because they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the streets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I resolve that this shall be the last inroad I shall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are some thoughts in this Peece which may seem to rebell against the empire of the Schools; yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the publick Clock of the City, especially where the sun of Righteousness hath not, by pointing clearly
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the dyal of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the error. There are some expressions in it, which censure may force to speak otherwayes then they have in commission; yet none of them got room in this Discourse, untill they first gave an account of their design to a most pious and learned Divine: and so, it may be the lines are of themselves streight, albeit they lye not parallel with each censurers crooked rule. As this Discourse intends, for the Divines of our Church, all respect; So all that is in it, is most freely submitted to their censure.

The Author intended this Discourse only as an introduction to the Stoicks morals, but probably, he will, for many years, stop here.

ERRATA.

E R R A T A.

Blurrer in the Copy and the Authors absence occasioned these *errata's*, which must be helped before reading, seing they destroy both the sense and soundness of the Discourse.

IN the Preface, p. 2. l. 4. for *Prophet*, read *Jehonadab*: p. 9. f. *Taps* r. *Tops*. p. 15. l. 7. add *some* before *Episcopists* and *Presbyterians*, p. 16. l. 4. f. *all* r. *almost all*.

In the Book, p. 24. l. 16. f. bath no, r. seems to have no. p. 26. l. 18. f. is but a conceit, r. seems but a conceit. p. 35. l. 13. f. continual r. extraordinary. p. 58. l. 19. f. triumphant, r. militant. p. 63. l. 22. f. ever any, r. few have. p. 73. l. 10. f. excrement-silius, r. excrementitious. p. 74. l. 17. f. an allegory, etc. r. that there run many hid allegories from Genesis to Johns Revelations, wherein the mystical sense deserves likewise the name of Gods Word. p. 85. l. 8. add, yet this is but a sophisme; for, seeing our hadies are the temples of the holy Ghost, we can no more bestow them upon such uses, then a Church-warden can give the use of the Church to Taverners. p. 85. l. 12. f. thundered from mount Sinai, r. delivered in almost one context with that Law which was thundred from mount Sinai. p. 121. l. 22. f. an unbyassed enquiry it will appear, r. upon an superficial enquiry it would appear. By the Laws of his Countrey, p. 57. and elsewhere, the Author means, that Religion which is settled by Law.

In other expressions, the Author recommends himself to the gloss of the readers charity.

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